

**Bulletin of
Sultania Historical Society
(BOSHS)**

A Quarterly Journal

Vol. II Issue: 01 & 02
January-June 2018

Prof. S.A. Nadeem Rezavi
(General Editor)

Lubna Irfan
(Editor)

Asra Alavi
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From the General Editor's Desk

We have completed one full year of our publication and now we are putting the first issue of the volume II in your hands.

It was a busy and hectic academic year for the Department which saw the holding of a number of Conferences, Seminars and Symposiums. We had promised to be regular in holding our weekly student seminars and I am also happy to note that we did not fail! The Sultania Historical Society saw the participation of a large number of students, teachers and scholars.

I had promised in the beginning of the previous session that we would try to organise interactions with students of other institutions. We did manage to attract the students of Jesus & Mary, University of Delhi to come over and participate in a day long symposium. This event was reported in one of our Bulletin too.

I am happy to report that a positive change was discernible amongst the students who were actively involved in the seminars when they walked in before the viva vice and interview boards! Wish all the students would have participated...

This year when we open for the new academic session we will make a minor change in the format of our weekly Seminars: instead of simple presentations, we will try to include group discussions and detailed discussions on new publications. The usual format of paper presentation would however also continue.

I must take this opportunity to thank all those who made these seminars, symposiums and discussions possible. The MA final year students were more active than their counterparts in MA first year. (It is however unfortunate that many Modern India students decided not to come!). A group of Research Scholars also were very regular and helped in the seminars being held even when MA students were busy in their Mid-term exams!

I would like to thank Professors Irfan Habib, Shireen Moosvi, Manvendra K Pundhir and Mohammed Sajjad for being actively involved. Lubna Irfan, as usual was as energetic as ever. She did jobs which were beyond her brief as an editor! Asra Alavi and Zainab Naqvi were equally helpful and diligent. Zainab drafted a number of reports, texts were typed by Asra at very short notices!

Our office staff, especially our lower staff were also always there when needed! Thanks are due to Muzammil, Ejaz and Saeed for supplying us tea in all the sessions. Thanks are due to Sherwani Sahib for always being ready to make the Department funds available if and when needed! Hope all of you enjoyed our annual session followed by aftār and dinner.

In the end, let me congratulate Asra Alavi for bagging this year's Razmi Rizwan Memorial Award for securing the highest percentage in her MA previous exams with Medieval India. I wish her luck for her final results but let the best one win!

(Professor Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi)

Chairman & Coordinator

CAS, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

Editor's Comment

Bringing out the first issue of the second volume of Bulletin of Sultania Historical Society (BOSHS) is a great pleasure. This issue stands as testimony of the endless academic endeavors and engagements undertaken at the CAS Department of History, AMU in the past year. It also establishes hope that constant efforts do make a difference. Saturday Seminars which were conducted under the purview of the Sultania Historical Society have become a regular feature of Department and this bulletin reproduces some of the papers that were presented in these Seminars. Earlier issues of the journal had different approaches, the first and second issues of the first Volume, presented the readers with the academic activities conducted at the department, the third and fourth issues were thematic ones and focused on specific topics. The former was a tribute to the founder of Aligarh Muslim University, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his historical activities, and the latter attempted to bring to focus the issue of understanding the difference between Myth and History. The first Volume of the Journal was well received by the readers. The current issue of the journal is broadly focused on the cultural aspects of Medieval India with reference to spaces and their dynamics.

The first paper in the journal is contributed by Dr. Shivangini Tandon who tries to bring forth the politics embedded in the household which is usually considered an insulated space devoid of having any role in state formation, the author bursts these misconceptions with the help of a critical reading of two *tazkiras* (biographical dictionaries) from Mughal period. The session witnessed a great amount of student engagement and many questions were put up to the presenter. Following this the next paper also looks at the space of the harem but of the Marwar dynasty, the presenter Mohd. Asif, an M.A. Final year student at the Department brought about this work after completing an internship at Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur, the documents he looked at during this internship formed the basis of his analysis of the condition of Eunuchs at the seraglio of the Marwar Dynasty. Nasreen Yasmeen, a Research Scholar at the Department was the next presenter, she in her paper again tries to problematize the relationship of the harem and the political power with reference to Nur Jahan, she highlights the changing dynamics of the 17th century Mughal Indian polity as an important player in the rise of Nur Jahan. The last paper was contributed by Mohammad Abdullah Raza, another Research Scholar at the Department, his paper highlights the nature of social and cultural fabric of medieval India by studying a Eunuch's architectural enterprise from Akbar's time in the vicinity of the Mughal capital Agra.

Apart from these articles, the journal also has a book review of the edited work of Mohammad Habib, *Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture: The Delhi Sultanate and its Times* by an M.A. (Previous) student of the Department, Ms. Zainab Naqvi.

In addition this the issue also produces reports regarding various activities held at the Department, it carries reports of an International Conference conducted in the month on January, two survey trips conducted in the month of March to Delhi and Fatehpur Sikri by the Department for the M.A. (Final) students, the annual function of Sultania Historical Society and of a Symposium held on the theme of challenges to the management of the national heritage.

This journal is a result of efforts of the Joint- Editor and Secretary of the Sultania Historical Society Ms. Asra Alavi and of the Joint Secretary Ms. S. Zainab Naqvi. The work of compiling reports and reading and re-reading articles takes a major part of ones energy and these two, despite their exams did a great job. Gratitude is also due to all the participants and presenters of the Seminars.

-Lubna Irfan
Research Scholar
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Content

Papers:

- Dr. Shivangini Tandon,** . .Pp.01-07
Representations of Household as Political Spaces
in Indo-Persian Tazkiras
- Mohd. Asif,** . .Pp.08-12
An Introduction to the Eunuchs of the Zanana Deodi(Harem)
of Marwar Dynasty
- Nasreen Yasmeen Khan,** . .Pp.13- 18
Sovereignty and Imperial Women in the 17th Century Mughal
Empire: The Case of Nur Jahan
- Mohammad Abdullah Raza,** . .Pp.19-26
Surveying a Noble's Architectural Enterprise:
A Tomb, Tank and Water Pavilion at Etmadpur, District Agra
- S. Zainab Naqvi,** . .Pp.27-29
Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture, The Delhi
Sultanate and its Times by Mohammad Habib (Book Review)

News from the Department:

- International Conference . .Pp.30-33
- Survey Trips of M.A. Students . .Pp.34-39
- Sultania Historical Society Function . .Pp.40-43
- Symposium on Our Heritage at Risk : . .Pp.44-45
The Problem of Managing our National Monuments
- Recent Publications of the Department . .Pp.46

Representations of Household as Political Spaces in Indo-Persian *Tazkiras*

-Dr. Shivangini Tandon
Assistant Professor,
Centre for Women's Studies,
AMU



Fig. 1: Dr. Shivangini Tandon presenting her paper in the Seminar

In the Mughal imperial *tazkiras*, life-stories are narrated within a community-centered frame of reference. They do not describe the lives of their subjects in isolated, de-contextualized terms, removed from the wider social world, but rather as stories of persons whose lives were enriched by household and familial relations.¹ In their description of the political process, and the activities of the ruling classes and the aristocracy, our *tazkiras* reveal the complex imbrications of household with imperial sovereignty. Indeed, in our anxiety to present the state as a 'centralized-bureaucratic' structure, we have tended to focus on the formal

institutions of rule, and have ignored the strength of informal alliances, and intimate relations emerging from the spaces of the household in shaping imperial sovereignty. One of the important perspectives about the political process that we gain from these biographical dictionaries is that the household and the state were deeply entwined with each other; state formation and household activity were part of the same process.² In her study of imperial women, Ruby Lal has drawn attention to the significance of domesticity as a political space, and has brought to light the extent to which the harem and the court constituted each other.³ Since her work was centered

1 For the development of the notion of individual and shifts in the perception of personhood in the 19th century see Francis Robinson, 'Religious Change and the Self in Muslim South Asia Since 1800', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 22, 001 (1999). Special Issue.13-27.

2 For details on the various aspects of the Mughal State- revenue, military, fiscal, trade and the monetary system, look at the works produced by Irfan Habib, Athar Ali, Shireen Moosvi and Tapan Raychaudhuri, among others. For instance, M. Athar Ali, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Mughal Empire', *JRAS*, 1 (1978), 38-49, Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, second revised edition (New Delhi, 1999) and Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire, c.1595: A Statistical Study* (New Delhi, 1987) for details.

3 Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge, 2005). For an excellent study on the importance of gender and household among the Anglo India communities in colonial India, see Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge, 2006).

on the agency of imperial women, she expectedly did not go on to examine household-state relations as a part of the wider process of state formation. In a path-breaking work, Munis Faruqi has drawn our attention to the political significance of the princely households in the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal state, arguing that the conflicts among the princes served to strengthen rather than weaken the state.⁴ In further pursuing this shift in Mughal historiography, the evidence in our *tazkiras* is indeed quite significant; we get elaborate and detailed descriptions of princely households, which provide fresh perspectives about state-household relations in the Mughal period. More importantly, these biographical works provide a lot of interesting details about the aristocratic households, as well; their thick descriptions about the households of the nobles and the elites reveal their political significance, and their imbrications with the princely households and the state.

In Mughal historiography,⁵ the household has been studied in isolation from the political and economic developments. A careful scrutiny of the evidence reveals to us that it was as much a political as a social space. The imperial household was indeed an extension of the state, and was tied to imperial sovereignty. Mughal historians have not looked at the aristocratic households, and in the emphasis they place on imperial chronicles, where they are conspicuously absent, they have failed to look into their political significance. One of the objectives of this paper then is to look at the representation of households in biographical accounts, and the state-household relations that we see in the narratives of princely and aristocratic households.

Stephen Blake has argued that the Mughal state was a patrimonial- bureaucratic structure, in which the system of rule was shaped by a mix of 'patrimonial' and 'bureaucratic' principles.⁶ Terming the state as a "loosely structured group of men controlled by the

imperial household", he finds the imperial household as the central element in state formation. Even as his 'patrimonial-bureaucratic' model for the Mughal empire has been contested by historians,⁷ his model is a useful one in drawing out the linkages between the imperial household and state formation. Taking the argument further, J. F. Richards has drawn our attention to the role of rituals and codes of civility and conduct (*adab*) in articulating household relations in courtly culture; these rituals also served to legitimate imperial authority by allowing it to represent itself in patrimonial terms.⁸ According to him, the Mughal emperors emphasized the importance of handling fiscal, administrative and military duties by the nobles and simultaneously encouraged them to maintain a large private household establishment for that purpose. For instance, the practice of giving rank/*mansab* to a noble, making attendance upon the emperor either in the court or in the imperial encampment mandatory, showing chivalry on the battlefield as a certain means of promotion etc ensured the loyalty of the subjects towards the emperor. Moreover, the maintenance of large private establishments (employing multiple accountants, secretaries, treasurers etc in them) by nobles ensured the noble of an upward mobility in the hierarchy within the courtly circles. Thus, leading to a strengthening of the Mughal imperial sovereignty as well as the nobles' own reputation/status.⁹ In an important critique of their work, Rosalind O' Hanlon points out that the household was a gendered space, and given the relations of the household with imperial sovereignty, we need to look at gender relations, in particular the imperial norms of masculinity, to better understand household-state relations in Mughal India.¹⁰

In an effort to recover the political agency of imperial women, Ruby Lal looks at domesticity as a political space, and in her work on the early Mughals presents a convincing case for the mutual

4 For details refer to Munis D. Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719* (Cambridge and New York, 2012).

5 For some of the excellent studies on family and household relations in South Asia see Indrani Chatterjee (ed.), *Unfamiliar Relations*.

6 For details refer to Stephen P. Blake, 'The Patrimonial -Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals', *JAS*, 39, (1979), 1:77-94 and Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India* (Cambridge, 1991).

7 See, for example, Sanjay Subramanian, 'The Mughal State- Structure or Process? Reflections on Recent Western Historiography' *IESHR*, 29, (1992).303-5.; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subramaniam (ed.), *The Mughal State and Writing the Mughal World*, Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality*.

8 For details see, J.F. Richards, (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, 1978) and 'Norms of Comportment Among Imperial Mughal Officers', Metcalf (ed.) *Moral Conduct And Authority*. p. 256.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 252-89.

10 Rosalind O' Hanlon, 'Kingdom, Household And Body History, Gender And Imperial Service under Akbar', *Modern Asian Studies*, 41, 5 (2007), 5: 889-923.



Fig. 2: Babur meeting a princess, work of Mansur, Baburnama, AD 1598, National Museum, New Delhi.

Imbrications of the harem with the imperial court. Challenging the 'orientalist' depiction of the Mughal harem as a site of eros, her work reveals the disciplinary processes at work in these spaces, and the centrality of a controlled, discipline body to the enunciation of legitimate rule.¹¹ More importantly, her work demonstrates how the household was a political process, and in doing so, reveals the impressive agency available to the women in the harem.¹²

Given the focus on the imperial household, these historians have culled their evidence largely from

the court chronicles. My study of the Mughal tazkiras confirms the political significance of the household, and largely corroborates the intricate inter-relations between the imperial court and the household. One of my efforts here is to compare and contrast the evidence in imperial chronicles that has largely been explored by these historians with the information we find in the biographical works in the period. At the same time, we need to bear in mind that in shaping the rule structure it was not just the imperial household, but those of the princes, the nobles and the aristocrats that were equally important. In a path-breaking work, Munis Faruqi has revealed the immense political significance of the princely households, and their role in the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal empire. While emphasizing the importance of these princely household units, not just in Mughal India but in the Islamic world, his work takes us away from the imperial court to the politics of flux and tenuous negotiations in Mughal expansion in India.¹³

In making this effort, that is, in exploring resources, networks, and the political roles of the Mughal aristocratic households, I shall be focusing on the two political biographies that form the primary base for this study: Bhakkari's *Zakhirat ul Khawanin* and Shah Nawaz's *Ma'asir ul Umara*.

Aristocratic Households and the State: Socialization, Networks and Politics

In historical chronicles, the aristocratic households are described by two sets of terms: harem and sarkar. The sarkar relates to the vast establishment controlled by the noble, whereas, hidden from the public gaze, harem referred to the secluded quarters inhabited by women (as also servants and close affines). The distinctions between them cannot be stretched beyond a point, and in actual practice, both the sarkar and the harem were hardly distinguishable from each other. If the harem was a 'private' familial space of affect and emotions, it was also a political

11 For details see, Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power*. Moreover, an important work that looks into bodily deportments and corporeal practices under the Mughals, and their relations with imperial sovereignty, is A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship & Sainthood in Islam* (New York, 2014).

12 Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power*.

13 For details see Munis D. Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire*.



Fig. 3: Prince and courtiers at camp, attributed to Payag, Circa AD 1650. Collection of Terence McInerney, New York.

space; familial affect and relations served to cultivate and maintain durable political relations. Similarly, if the sarkar was a space for the circulation of resources, the distribution of these resources, and the differential access to them, were matters that were determined by relations of affect and emotions.

The important point is that our tazkiras represent the aristocratic households as replicas of the imperial or the princely establishments, with their independent financial administration, a motley of attendants, separate apartments for wives and concubines, who were constantly served by a team of slaves and eunuchs, several 'external' apartments, kitchens, courtyards, etc. For instance, Shaikh Hassu Muquarrab Khan, a Chishti Shaikhzada who served as a surgeon during Jahangir's time, had taken up residence in the Jannatabad garden which he had laid out and lived there with a thousand beautiful female attendants (sahelis) and other servants who took care of both his workshop as well as the inner apartments

of his womenfolk.¹⁴ The Mughal nobles were fond of building huge household structures, and tastefully decorated them, embellishing them with expensive linens, curtains, furniture, etc. for e.g. Said Khan Chaghata, who held the Multan sarkar in fief during the reign of Akbar, had such lavish carpets, household items and wares that his house reminded one of paradise.¹⁵ Another noble who was an Iranian by descent and became the diwan of Prince Sultan Parvez had such extravagant food items, carpets, dresses and gardens in his household that people were astonished to see it.¹⁶ Representing a smaller, more compact, and for the common subjects more accessible, version of the state in the locality, these aristocratic households included a large administrative staff consisting of the secretaries, accountants, stewards, store keepers, stablemen, etc. Other professional services were provided by the physicians, astrologers, architects, painters, musicians and dancers.¹⁷

¹⁴ Bhakkari, Zakhirat. II, p. 273.

¹⁵ Ibid., I, p.191.

¹⁶ Ibid., II, p.377.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Abul Fazl for e.g. is famous for having a lavish kitchen in his house, with superintendents who looked after its upkeep, a cook, many servants to see if the food was properly laid etc.¹⁸ Another instance is that of Nawwab Mirza Ghazi Baig Tarkhan, son of Mirza Jani Baig. He was himself unrivalled in music and used to play the tambourine, Indian drums, guitar (tambur) etc and poets like Shaida Isfahani, among ten others gave him company in his house.¹⁹ Another noble Nawwab Islam Khan Fathpuri, the governor of Orissa and Bengal, during the time of emperor Jahangir had enrolled in his service all Lulis, Hodkanis, Domnis, Kanchanis and Kamachanis (community of female performers, mainly dancing girls) of the entire province and paid them 80,000 rupees as their monthly salary.²⁰ For the powerful women in the household, there were slave girls, entertainers, eunuchs, etc., as well. For e.g. a Brahmin lady Bibi Kishna, wife of Shaikh Abdu'r-Rahim Lakhnawi not only had an army of servants to help her within her household but also who helped her build huge gardens, villages, sarais, shops, reservoirs, mausoleum etc, even after the death of her husband.²¹ This is an important point. In replicating the imperial court, elite households served to represent the state in the locality, acting as its representative for the subjects. At the same time, with their vast establishment and networks of resource dispensation, these households served to consolidate imperial sovereignty, extending and strengthening political alliances with the local power relations. Working as conduits for the state, their significance in the expansion of the empire cannot be over-emphasized.

The imperial visits to the aristocratic households were imbued with a lot of symbolic significance. These visits were a source of blessing (Baraka) for the honored noble, and reaffirmed his position in the locality as a representative of the sacred imperial Mughal authority. Since imperial sovereignty was sacred, and centered on the body of the king,²² his presence at a noble's household, invested that household with analogous sacredness and divine, if delegated, authority. It is owing to this reason that our tazkiras revel in imperial visits to the elite

households, providing extra-ordinary, even exaggerated descriptions of the reception that the Mughal rulers enjoyed at the household of a noble. To take an instance, Bhakkari mentions a noble, Hakim Ali whose house was an architectural marvel of the time; it was built beneath a reservoir. Akbar paid him a visit, and while he was at his place, says Bhakkari, he would dive into the reservoir to reach his place; and while he was resting at his house, Akbar would read books, apply his expensive perfumes, enjoy sumptuous feasts, and retire on his comfortable bed.²³ In yet another instance, Khudawand Khan Dakani who held a high position under the Nizamul-Mulk regime (of Ahmadnagar) was invited by Abul Fazl to his house (at the instructions of Akbar) for a lavish feast consisting of lavish food and drinks.²⁴ Clearly, the spaces of the household were utilized to build political alliances and display loyalty and service for the state and the ruler.

The aristocratic households, our tazkiras tell us, were centers of immense charitable activities, distributing alms and providing succor to the 'deserving poor', the sayyads and nobles who had fallen on bad times, widows who had no means of maintenance, Sufis and saints. One of the very high ranking amirs, during the period of Akbar, Murtada Khan Sheikh Farid Bukhari of Delhi, constructed many sarais and hospices when he was the governor of Gujarat. Referring to his charitable activities, Bhakkari in Zakhirat writes:

“He bedecked Delhi and Faridabad with edifice of ornament and water-tanks...He had made a list of the Sayyid-residents of the entire province of Gujarat, male or female, young, old or a child, even an expectant woman, and paid for the marriage expenses of their sons and daughters out of his own estate.”²⁵

Another instance is that of Nawwab Miyan Muhammad Khan Niyazi who was a very significant amir of Akbar's reign. He not only paid a handsome salary to his soldiers but also fed the people of his entire chowki every day. If his servant died, his pension was given to his son regularly and if he was

18 For details refer to Bhakkari, Zakhirat, I, p. 72.

19 Ibid., II, p. 29.

20 Ibid., II, p.192.

21 Ibid., I, p.238.

22 For details see A.Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*. Also see J.F. Richards, (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia and 'Norms of Comportment Among Imperial Mughal Officers'*.

23 Bhakkari, Zakhirat, I, pp. 243-44.

24 Ibid., I, p. 227.

25 Ibid., pp. 137-8

childless, then to his widow.²⁶ Mention can also be made of Raja Ramdas Kachhwaha who had a very friendly relationship with Akbar. He is known to give away huge sums of money as charity to the community of the *charans*,²⁷ *bhats* ²⁸ and the courtesans. Infact, Kavi Gang, the bard, composed a verse in Hindi in his praise, the opening line of which is as follows:

Kahan-lav bakhan karun audit Ram-das
Tere debe mal-kun hamal hairt hen

The above lines, when translated into English mean:

How long can I sing your praises, O Ram-das son of Audat?

For carrying the money given by you, a porter is required ²⁹.

It is evident from the above instances that in representing the Mughal state as a redistributive system, benevolent and charitable, the aristocratic households played a crucial role. The state did reach out to the socially inferior groups, through its charitable activities managed by the aristocratic households, but it still retained its lines of exclusionary closure, as well. While delineating the charitable activities of the Shaikh, Bhakkari goes on to add that even as his liberality was universal, he absolutely detested the charans, kalawants and the dancing girls. While he detested these itinerant communities, the same Shaikh ceremonially honored, says Bhakkari, his horsemen/footmen, horse-grooms and scavengers with a saropa thrice a year. This is intriguing! While it reflects a certain disdain for itinerant communities in Mughal court culture, it also reflects a certain correlation between the nature of servile service and level of subjection in the period.

One of the interesting things that come out from our tazkiras is that the elite households were not just centers of redistribution of resources and power, but were also centers for the promotion of knowledge

and scientific enquiry. The author of Zakhirat refers to Mukhlis Khan's interest in husbandry and Hakim Beg's interest in horticulture. ³⁰ Another noble, Shaikh Hassu Muquarrab Khan who was a surgeon by profession and also served as a governor of Patna, Akbarabad and Gujarat during the reign of Jahangir had created a magnificent garden in his house. He had grown fruits and flowers from the whole world; even saffron was grown in his garden. Fruits from cold and hot weather countries, Europe, Iraq and Ajam (Islamic countries other than Arabia) were all found there.³¹ Indeed, the significance of the elite households went beyond the political and cultural domains, and included the domains of the organization of knowledge and production activities.

Space and Authority in the Mughal Tazkiras

The household establishments of the nobles were important both as residential as well as economic units of consumption, production and exchange. The mansions of nobles acted as arenas of social organization within the city, and served as the primary political, administrative and military unit of the imperial structure.³² However, since they were supposed to serve as smaller versions of the imperial court, our tazkiras take care to differentiate them from the households of kings and the princes in terms of the scale of grandeur, display and patronage networks. A verse in Ma'asir-ul-Umara, thus describes the royal establishment in Shahjahanabad:

Such skill has been expended in its construction,
That skill itself is busy in its decoration.³³

Beginning with the selection of a site, complete and perfect, to the employment of skilled artisans and trained builders, the imperial establishments were all along a careful and conscious representation of the might and power of the ruling elite. Shah Nawaz Khan describes the fort in Shahjahanabad (and the royal chambers therein) in his tazkira, in the following words:

²⁶ Ibid., p. 163.

²⁷ It refers to a caste of performers who lived/living in Sindh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. They are known for their literary and poetic talents and always received court patronage.

²⁸ They are community of bards known for their phakra (speaking poetically in praise of others) who are found in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana and Rajasthan. They kept records of genealogy and wrote about the exploits or the heroic deeds of their masters.

²⁹ Bhakkari, Zakhirat, I, p. 239.

³⁰ Bhakkari, Zakhirat, II, p. 288.

³¹ Ibid., p. 271.

³² Metcalf (ed.) Moral Conduct And Authority. pp. 259-60.

³³ Bhakkari, Zakhirat, III, p. 477.

“At a cost of sixty lacs of rupees (the fort) was completed in nine years, three months and a couple of days. The lofty fort which is octagonal according to the Baghdad-style, is 1000 royal yards long, and 300 yards broad. Its walls are built of the red stone of Fathpur - - - The royal mansions, consisting of the Shah Mahal with a silver roof, Imtiyaz Mahal with the bed-room known as the Burj-i-Tala (The Golden Chamber, and the Private and Public Daulat Khana (Palace), and the Hayat Baksh garden cost twenty eight lakh of rupees. The palaces of the Begum Sahiba and other chaste inmates of the Harem cost seven lakhs, and other buildings, such as the bazar and the guard-houses inside the mighty fort, which were designed to serve for the royal manufactories, were completed at a cost of four lakhs.”³⁴

He further adds:

“ - - - In all the royal apartments were spread beautiful carpets, which had been prepared in Kashmir and Lahore out of selected wool with great skill and taste, while on the doors of the courtyards and porticoes were hung curtains embroidered, worked in gold, and velvet brocades prepared by the skilled workers of Gujarat. In every apartment were placed jeweled, gold enamelled, and plainly worked thrones, and after arranging high seats and cushions having covers with brilliant pearls, gold embroidered cloths were spread over the thrones. The three sides of the great portico of the private and public palaces were embellished with a silver enclosure, and opposite the Jharokha was a golden enclosure, while golden stars with golden chains were hung in all alcoves, and these made the place resemble the heavens (bihisht).”³⁵

In equating the imperial palaces with the 'heaven' (bihisht), the tazkiras seek to distinguish them from the aristocratic households; the latter were modest imitations of the imperial court. At the same time, it is also evident from the takiras that these households were still representations of imperial sovereignty in the space of the localities; like the imperial court they commanded patronage networks, were engaged in charitable activities, and dispensed justice. Referring to the establishment of a trusted noble of Akbar, Nawab Mian Muhammad Khan Niazi, the author of Zakhirat says:

“He fed the people of the chowki every night with due honor and on his own accord - - - about three hundred widows received pension from his establishment - - - he administered justice to the oppressed and minutely

look into the affairs of the needy persons. In the first watch of the night, he would meet soldiers, learned and accomplished men and saintly persons. In the intervening two watches, he would be in the inner apartments. He would, during the last watch of the night, as long as he lived, keep awake, offering tahajjud prayers, reciting the religious formula and prescribed passages.”³⁶

The tazkiras profusely describe the charitable activities of the nobles; the aristocratic households are represented as centers of immense patronage networks, serving to integrate the subjects to the rule structure through its redistributive activities. As part of the imperial redistributive system, the nobles are also represented as participating in the construction, maintenance and upkeep of religious establishments. To take an instance, the author of Zakhirat takes care to state in his biographical sketch of the Mughal bureaucrat, Mir Abul Qasim Namakin that when he received sarkar Bhakkar in jagir in 1595-96, he constructed a lofty Jami' mosque in the town of Shakkar (Sukkhur) in the central market-place; he also built 'Idgah mosques in the towns of Lohri and Shakkar, as well. ³⁷ One thing that emerges quite clearly from these 'political' tazkiras is that it is service to the state which determined the space and the significance that would be accorded to the life of an individual.

Conclusion

This paper has hopefully highlighted the significance of the elite households in imperial expansion and the representation of the Mughal court culture. I have suggested that there were recursive relations between the state and the household; state-household compact of authority served to restructure Mughal imperial sovereignty. With their network of relations going deep into the localities, these aristocratic households were crucial for the expansion and consolidation of Mughal imperial rule in South Asia. Moving away from the standard Mughal chronicles to the biographies and biographical dictionaries, my work argues that the political activities were deeply entangled with cultural activities; state formation was as much a political, as a cultural process. The state was a malleable formation, and while it did have institutional forms, it still depended on informal relations and the households to articulate and reinforce its authority.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Bhakkari, Zakhirat, I, p. 163.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 198.

An Introduction to the Eunuchs of the Zanana Deodi (Harem) of Marwar Dynasty

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Fig. 4: Mohd. Asif presenting his paper in the Student Seminar.

The term Eunuch is of ambiguous nature and requires great attention; in terms of its meaning and kind. Before moving to our main topic, we should know who eunuchs are. According to online Merriam-Webster dictionary there are three definitions of Eunuchs in which they refer to a castrated man placed in charge of a harem or employed as a chamberlain in a palace, a man or a boy deprived of the testis or external genitals, and one that lacks virility or power. Eunuchs are of two kinds one are innate i.e. who are born as eunuch and second are those who turns into eunuchs after castration although reasons may vary. Here in this paper we will deal with latter one who were castrated and thereafter mainly employed in the royal harem. As we know that the practice of keeping the eunuchs in the harem was not new in this particular period which we are dealing but widespread across the dynasties and globe for a very long time. The origin of this practice of castration is widely and deeply rooted in the history so it would be difficult to discuss it here in this paper. Here our concern would

be the Eunuchs in the Zanana Deodi of Marwar Dynasty. Both kind of eunuchs have their different professions for example innate eunuchs were engaged in dancing, singing and begging which in the present day also continues while the castrated eunuch had a secure place as guards in royal harems¹.

The Marwar dynasty of Jodhpur (in present day Rajasthan state of India) ruled from an impregnable fort i.e. Mehrangarh fort which is also known as citadel of sun; constructed on a hilltop. Project of this fort were laid down by Rao Jodha who moved from Mandore (few kilometers away from modern day Jodhpur) to this place where he founded a new city Jodhpur, successor of Rao Jodha with time to time added many other parts in it. This fort has many palaces inside it and the inner most section is known as Zanana Deodi (female compartment), named in native language or we commonly know it as Harem. Architecture of Zanana Deodi is really fascinating and one can observe the influence of Mughal

¹Marwar Census Report, 1891, p.383, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.

Architecture over the Rajput architecture in it and other parts of the fort. Zanana Deodi is constructed in such a manner that from outside no one could see inside the harem, while the resident of Zanana Deodi could see the outside clearly through beautiful Jaalis (intricate ornamental openwork in wood, metal, stone etc). Such type of building style of female compartment or Zanana Deodi shows that the concept of paraphernalia was firmly established in the Jodhpur dynasty too.

In this inner most section of the fort i.e. Zanana Deodi, queens and other women of royal family with their cohorts used to live. A complete procedure of administration used to follow inside it and to look after its administration four main officials; Daroga, Deodidar, Nazar & Urda-Beganiya were appointed. Eunuchs are not only appointed on the post of Nazar but also preferred on other posts also like Daroga. Daraoga was the chief officer in the Zanana Deodi; during the reign of Maharaja Ajit Singh Ji, Nazar Nathu & Nazar Kiran and similarly during the reign of Maharaja Man Singh Ji Nazar Chaina Ram appointed as Daroga. They were responsible to arrange food, clothes, medical facilities in case anyone fell ill in the Deodi and so on. In Marwar Ri Khyat (Official court History) we find that Daroga had the authority to assign the Deodidar after consulting with the queen of the palace. Deodidar or gatekeeper was second in command and had the responsibility to provide security. The post of the Deodidar was hereditary and they were given salary some times in cash while some times they were assigned Jagir in lieu of salary². Here we will be dealing with only Nazar as on this post only eunuchs were appointed. Although the post of Nazar came on third position after Daroga and Deodidar (Gatekeeper) but played a role of great influence. On the fourth position, there comes Urda-Beganiya these were the Nigger women whose duty were to guard the queen and to stay with them while going somewhere, had a dress code and were at home in sword fighting. During any journey, on the way when the king used to rest in the royal camp along with his queens, then these Urda-Beganiya used to guard the camp whole night³. To keep the females in the paraphernalia and out of reach of other men considered to be a work of great dignity and respect.

In medical science, we found that if we removed the testis of a man in his childhood it would end the production of sexual hormones i.e testosterone in a man and it would lead to developing feminine characteristics. While on the other hand innate eunuchs might have both the masculine or the feminine character and chances to make physical relations with them more possible as they have sexual hormones in them. So, in this way the castrated eunuchs were the obvious choice for harem.

The practice to keep the eunuchs in the Zanana Deodi in Jodhpur dynasty most probably came from Mughal influence as geographically and traditionally, closely linked principality of Udaipur and Bundi have no concept of keeping Eunuchs in Zanana Deodi as they believed that "Eunuchs are not men but they appear like them"⁴. In day to day life they were known as Najar Ji because of their dominance over the post Nazar, from security to the management in Zanana Deodi & other such assignments were done by the Nazars. They used to act as the medium in between Zanana Deodi and the outer world. They were in trust of queen and the king; they use to carry the news of confidential nature. Besides unmarried women, Eunuchs and children no one was allowed to go inside while they could walk barely in every inner part of harem or in the private chambers of queen, queen mother, and of others⁵. Not only news of confidential nature but the works to bring expensive items such as clothes, jewelry, ornaments and items for decoration were done under their supervision⁶. In Zanana Deodi Eunuchs were in large numbers but in addition to it there were the further personalization of them as every woman of royal house used to keep with them their personal eunuchs who always stayed along with them all the time and accompanied them too during their sawari (ride) such as to pilgrimage and holy shrines. Nazars were the checkers and doers in the Zanana Deodi, when workers came to the Deodi they were surveillance by Nazars all the time, not only here the duty of Nazars ended but it continued as Nazars had to look after the management of salary for workers. A number of Nazars in the queen's palace were of significant importance and were in confidence of queen and king. From the following

² Singh Brijesh Kumar, 1997. Maharaja Sri Vijay Singh Ri Khyat, p. 1-11, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

³ Bhati Sukh Singh, 2004. Dera Rau Khato, p.8, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre

⁴ Marwar Census Report-1891, Vol-3 p.386, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gehlaut Research Centre

⁵ Chundawat Laxmi Kumari, Khanda Vyah Ri Bahi, Preface, p. 7, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Mansingh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

⁶ Marwar Census Report, 1891, Vol-3, p.385,386,387, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.



Fig. 5: Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur

lines, “In the marriage procession or Barat they had their separate group with sizeable numbers and if any of them becomes angry or remained unsatisfied due to any reason then the host had to seek their pardon and need to convince them”⁷ we could observe that how important they were. For example, in the marriage of Maharaja Takhat Singh with the princess Jadochi Partap Kanwar of Jamnagar, at the time of adieu of procession (Barat) every member who came in the procession were given presents by the Jamnagar side according to their status and in which Nazar Harkaran refused to accept the presents and became angry as he was not satisfied with the given amount and demanded more. So, he was personally visited by the Jamnagar king to convince and there after given more gifts according to his status⁸. They were considered in each & every program due to their work and importance, they were the people who linked the Zanana Deodi with the outer world, nature of news might be varied but carrier was always the same i.e. Nazars, for instance, when king returned after being victorious from the war, news conveyed to the Zanana Deodi by the Nazar and in the same way news of emperor's death

also conveyed by them in the Deodi⁹ after which crying would start. They had strong working attitude and never let the emotions and relations to overcome their duty. For example, if the king died they were the soul person responsible to collect all the jewelries and other luxurious items from the wives of the dead king as it belonged to the imperial treasury. Their dedication to work and no family ties raised their importance as it made them more loyal to the rulers. When doing their duty, they didn't care about the present milieu or situation but about the royal command. We have sizable number of prominent eunuchs like Nazar Kusaliram, Nazar Anandram, Nazar Ilmas, Nazar Harkaran, Nazar Daulat Ram and so on. These were not only confined to the Zanana Deodi while enjoyed an influence over a large area and enjoyed a reputation. Many public work, constructions had been undertaken by them like Nazar Harkaran built ponds and a mosque, Maharaja Takhat Singh himself inaugurated the pond¹⁰. In modern day Jodhpur city, there is a place known as “Nazon Ki Haweli” or “Mansion of Eunuchs” near to Clock Tower Market, it was built during the time of Nazar Harkaran. Now the Haweli

⁷ Singh Brijesh Kumar, 1997. Maharaja Sri Vijay Singh Ri Khyat, p.94, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

⁸ Bhati Sukh Singh, 2004. Dera Rau Khato p.15, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

⁹ Jodhpur Hakikat Bahi, Vide Letter, p.434, (1913-17)

¹⁰ Bhati Narayana Singh, 1993. Maharaja Takhat Singh Ri Khyat p.105,120,128,212,267,310,355, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute.

is inhabited by the innate eunuchs and the Guru (an influential teacher or popular expert) is Meena Bua¹¹. When I visited her, she told me about Nazar Harkaran that he built many wells, even a mosque which is currently present in Ghass Mandi and known as “Mochioan Ki Masjid” or “Mosque of tanners” although they don't have written records to testify this. The record of expenditure of queens and their cohorts was maintained by the Nazars and by this we can conclude that they were not illiterate unlike innate eunuchs. As these present days, innate eunuchs keep themselves at arm length away from education. Their profession is begging, dancing and singing mainly. In this area of Jodhpur these innate eunuchs have a sphere of influence over politics. When I met Meena Bua who took the charge of Guru during the life time of her Guru Kamla Bua, She (Meena Bua) shared valuable information with me, she told me that eunuchs too have divisions in them as some came from lower castes and have different faith and living style, for example, Faatda in Gujarat State of India considered as the eunuchs of lower status. While on other hand they are well connected with eunuchs of India and its neighboring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. They have great respect for their Gurus and considered them more than their real mother and father. Meena Bua shared with me the names of previous gurus in chronological order, and here is the list of gurus shared by Meena Bua-Kamla Bua, Akhtar Bua, Jayethi Bhai, Rahim Bhagat Ji, Shakina Bua, Shyaam Bhagat Ji, Maula Bhagat Ji, Nabi Bhagat Ji, Peer Bhagat Ji, Chhel Kanwar Ji, Bharat Singh Ji and so on. In the list of important and powerful eunuchs Nazar Harkaran was not the only one in the queue; others too were powerful. In the place of their work or duty no one could take anything without their permission for instances, Vabha Lal Singh got a mattress used by eunuchs usually, only after the permission of Nazar Ilmas¹². Not only for big things but for minor things too, everyone had to seek their permission for example, in summer no one could take the fan without Nazar Ilmas's permission. And about Nazar Anand Ram and Nazar Harkaran we can find the details in Anand Vyav Ri Bahi. Almost in every ceremony and functions eunuchs had a secure place, be it was marriage ceremony or cremation

ceremony. In the marriage ceremony before circumambulation daughter's parents stay outside and there after the circumambulation, a Nazar used to ask them to come inside to perform the tradition of giving money to the newly wed couples¹³. Not only in this happy ceremony that they participated but secured their place in the cremation ceremony also, for example, when Maharaja Ajit Singh Ji was murdered by his son Bakhat Singh then his funeral took place in Mandore, where 66 people set themselves on the funeral pyre along with the corpse of Maharaja Ajit Singh and out of 66 two were the eunuchs¹⁴. The names of those two eunuchs were Nazar Nathuram and Nazar Kiran both were the Daroga of the Deodi during the time of Maharaja Ajit Singh¹⁵.

No doubt that they were castrated eunuchs who were given importance but innate eunuchs also enjoyed a considerable position in the society and were included in the state service also. Their condition was not deprived like today's innate eunuchs who are obliged by our social structure to beg and dance some times to enter in the profession of prostitution just for earning their livelihood. Not only in Jodhpur but in Jaipur too we notice eunuchs of great importance for example, Maharaja Sawain Jai Singh Ji ordered that name of Nazar Panna Mian be engraved on the top of coins followed by Maharaja's name¹⁶. Similarly, in Jodhpur Nazar Harkaran and Khwaja Farasat were the personality of great trust to Maharaja Jashwant Singh Ji and Maharaja Takhat Singh Ji. On moving towards their appearance they looked like man and we found that they used to dress themselves in the traditional attire known as KirkiraPaag/KhidgiaPaag which were usually been wore by the males.

On the last point, I want to opine that eunuchs were not only present in Zanana Deodi of Jodhpur and in its surrounding principalities but were popular across the globe. To keep eunuch in the harem just to protect the royal female from other men is the reflection of well-established patriarchal mind set. Right from this point we can see that this patriarchal mindset, which suppressed women from their rights and deprived them to live a life of their own, on the

11 Meena Bua at the present time is the Guru of Eunuchs in the Mansion of Eunuchs in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

12 Bhati Sukh Singh, 2007. Deran Rau Khato, Preface, p.15, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

13 Nagar Mahendra Singh, 2011. Marwar Ke Rajvansh Ki Sanskritik Paramparaen, Vol-II, p.342, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Mansingh Puustak Prakash Research Centre.

14 Bhati Sukh Singh, 2007. Deran Ro Khato, p.11, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Maharaja Mansingh Puustak Prakash Research Centre.

15 Bhati Singh Hukum, 2007, Rathora Ri Khyat, p. 425, Chaupasni, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: History Research Centre.

16 Marwar Census Report 1891, p.386, Jodhpur, Rajasthan: Sri Jagdish Singh Gahlaut Research Centre.

other side it enhance the inhumane practice of castration because of more demands of eunuchs in the royal harem to guard the women and in other place too. After castration eunuchs lost the bonding with their family and obviously have no option for new relations in the future. So, in such conditions they devoted themselves to the ruler and that's why they earned promotion in a very short time. Some people were castrated as a punishment while some did it voluntary to make a better carrier in the royal court. To the underprivileged it seems to be good to face the severe pain for a short time period instead of facing hunger for life. So, to change the premeditated perception towards eunuchs, like they were cruel and rude one should go through the text of that time when this practice of castration used to exist.

SOVEREIGNTY AND IMPERIAL WOMEN IN THE 17th CENTURY MUGHAL EMPIRE: THE CASE OF NUR JAHAN

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The simple sexual connotation attached to 'harem' and the space treated as a sexual hub was on account of caricaturing of 'Islamic harems' by European travellers. With obvious different cultural lens by which Islamic injunctions against sexual mixing, provisions for segregation of sexes and ladies' seclusion were assessed (not very different from conservative societies even in Europe), the organisation of harems in some parts of Islamic lands had greatly astonished the observers by its magnificence, aloofness and seclusion. All of this added to their perceptions about the harem as women's space reserved for pure pleasure and sexual excesses. Harems were presented by the European travellers as not only large magnificent structures where Muslim rulers indulged in sexual frivolity; these were seen as site of sexual oppression where women were kept guarded and secluded from the rest of the world.

The study of gender relations at the Mughal court and the rethinking of political, social and cultural milieu in the light of new questions on women's role and engagement other than in the purely trivial matters have hardly been explored. The influence of the ideology of the modern nineteenth century 'separate spheres' that viewed public and private in dichotomous separation explains some of the neglect in taking up the theme of women's public roles for research. The traditional historiography has further treated royal women's spaces as strictly domesticated spaces devoid of any role in governance and political culture. The problem therefore of gender representation of medieval Indian historiography is not so much of a total invisibility of women from history rather it is in the manner of its treatment. However, some recent progress in gender history has provided us with fresh concepts and tools to take the study of imperial women's political role further.

This paper looks at Nur Jahan's, Jahangir's wife's presence in public through her participation in real

sovereignty, in rituals at Jahangir's court and her acts of private and public piety. Though some work on Nur Jahan has been done with a full monograph by Findly, but she too has mainly located her within the pleasure paradigm of harem historiography.

Looking at the imperial household establishment that emerged with the 16th century empire under Akbar, we find an impressive structure with strong rigour of purdah at least from 1580s. Along with the changing kinship and relationship patterns that came with the empire, the prestige of the empire also required the creation of the 'sacred sublime space-the harem' that would denote the magnificence of the empire through keeping royal women at distance and away from public gaze. Royal women began to be referred as pardagiyan (the veiled ones),¹ strengthening the notion of purdah. Concepts of women's chastity and as repository of honour of the royal family came to be understood through the dignity of royal women. Abul Fazl uses other similar epithets besides 'pardagiyan' like 'Ismat qubab', 'hazrat saradiq-i-Ismat',² which obviously were not simply respect epithets by which royal women could be addressed but exalts the honour of the royal women by attributes of chastity, veiling practice and distance from public gaze. Such arrangements were clearly made by the official historians, to keep imperial women, who became repositories of imperial honour, obscured from public gaze.

The further consolidation in the seventeenth century empire, witnessed certain other trends as well. As the hierarchy sharpened, the women of the immediate family apparently became more important compared to the rest of the other extended relations. All senior women- mothers, grandmothers, foster mothers etc. were relegated to the background with Nur Jahan becoming the premier lady in the harem. Thus, the institution with queen/princess at the top of the hierarchy became an established feature of the seventeenth century harem. Perhaps, as the role of kinship had shrunk and the power now rested in the

¹ Abul-Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, ed. Sir Saiyyid Ahmed, Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 2005, p.31.



Fig. 6: Royal Lovers on a Terrace, Shah Shuja and his Bride, Circa AD 1633.

immediate family, the tradition of shared sovereignty was now to be shared with one of the most trusted member in the family. The choice naturally fell on a devoted wife whose interest was totally tied to the emperor. With sons posing threat to the emperor and Nur Jahan emerging as close and capable confidante soon after their marriage, became a partner in the exercise of sovereignty. Unlike, the reluctance of the official sources mentioning about the spouse of the king in the 16th century we find a little mention of Nur Jahan by Jahangir in Tuzuk, and thus the emergence of Nur Jahan as the premier wife. Though an exceptional women in history, her rise to power and prestige

speaks more about the development of emperor's persona and projection of an associated regal image, dazzling in shine as the emperor himself. Jahangir's first mention about Nur Jahan in 1614 and his projection of Nur Jahan in Tuzuk is worth noting as he speaks of his fondness and trust in Tuzuk. He says that when he fell ill (in 1614) he informed about his illness only to Nur Jahan. He writes: "I found a change in my health and by degrees was seized with fever and headache.....A few days passed in this manner, and I only imparted this to Nur Jahan Begum than whom I did not think anyone was fonder of me".³ He praises her extraordinary abilities, her sure shot in hunting lions.⁴ One does not know the motivation for Jahangir for raising Nur Jahan to this exceptional stature, besides that of conjugal love which again appears extraordinary given the reticence of the previous emperor to have the names of his wives public. Jahangir presents Nur Jahan with all needed qualities of sagacity, courage and strength required for the exercise of sovereignty in order to project her as alter-image of the King. This development quite new to the empire, only reflects a stage of further consolidation in the seventeenth century.

Clearly, contrary to Jahangir's projection of Nur Jahan in Tuzuk, he does mention his other wives not with name, but with their identity mainly as daughters of different Rajas and chiefs, as a number of them might

have entered the harem in positions of inferiority, as daughters of defeated foe⁵ with a total neglect of their role in empire making. Emperor's mother was projected as epitome of regality, as the most important of all the mothers and senior relations. Perhaps, this was in continuation of the trend that started with Akbar's empire when only mothers retained public visibility among other relations.⁶ Some senior women are mentioned without any role or status in the familial set up. For Instance, Ruqayyah Sultan Begum, Salima Sultan Begum, Akbar wives, are mentioned- Ruqaiyya Sultan when a garden was given to her as gift, and when she went to visit Humayun's tomb;

2. Abul-Fazl, Akbarnama, ed. Maulavi Abdur Rahim, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1887, Vol.3, pt.1, p.55.

3. Nur-ud-Din Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, ed. Syed Ahmed Khan, Ghazipur, 1863, p.130.

4. Ibid., pp.185-186.

5. The Mughal Harem, p.78. K.S.Lal opines that the daughters or relatives of India princes, who because of their defeat in war, political necessity or personal ambition, married their daughters and sisters to the Mughal rulers or princes.

6. Ruby Lal, Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World, Cambridge, 2005, pp.203, 204, 207.

And Salima Sultan on her death.⁷ The broad base of wives and inferior wives were now simply clubbed together in reference as 'ladies' *ahl-i Mahal*.⁸ Women of the family are generally described in a group. For Instance, he mentions his going out with 'ladies' for hunting with those who were 'screened by the curtains of honour' (sisters and other ladies).⁹ While the concepts of honour of the empire resting in imperial women, accounted for this reticence in naming the women of the imperial household, there appears also a definite hierarchy that allowed only few ladies with public roles and visibility.

Nur Jahan's feats and presence was repeatedly recorded and presented as exemplary. As the court under Jahangir gave a special place to Nur Jahan, she had distinct role in performance of sovereignty.

Queen's acts of real sovereignty

Jahangir does not mention in Tuzuk about his marriage with Nur Jahan, but we see that immediately after his marriage with Nur Jahan, the mention of the occurrences of Nur Jahan in Tuzuk increases and this shows the increasing ascendancy of Nur Jahan over Jahangir. Perhaps, Jahangir himself appears quite keen to speak about the capacities of his queen, which ranged from her perfect shoot in hunt, her sagacity and wisdom, her advice and guidance in many crucial moments, and her real intervention in the court affairs. A number of other sources also speak of the great power she wielded at the court. Thomas Roe reports that when he first arrived at court (in 1616); he was asked to give a letter of commission to one of Jahangir's courtiers so that the queen could see his official seal for verification. He speaks of giving gifts to Nur Jahan along with that to Jahangir, clearly to win her support.¹⁰ Similarly, Thomas Keridge speaks of gifts to the queen by Mr. Edwards.¹¹ Such references of queens acts of real sovereignty had led scholars to call it a 'petticoat government' and

Jahangir reduced to Emperor only in name, though this was more on account of histories based on texts written in Shah Jahan's reign,¹² which were openly critical of Nur Jahan owing to Shah Jahan's hostility towards her.

However, different sources bring out the power and influence wielded by the queen on account of King's complete confidence in her. In an unprecedented act Jahangir transferred all property of Itimadu-d-daulah to Nur Jahan.¹³ Official decrees like the *hukms* bearing her seal speak of her involvement in matters of administration. These *hukms* were addressed to jagirdars to redress grievances of people.

By 1617, we find her clearly in charge of affairs, seeking information and supervising minute details, taking particular interest in the economic transactions, issuing *hukms* to the concerned officers. She used to personally give advancement and promotions to soldiers,¹⁴ amirs and private servants.¹⁵ In a *hukm*, bearing her seal, she sent specific orders to officers asking to clear debts,¹⁶ to send the amount due to the court (entire amount of *Ijara* from Pargana of Amber on *zimn* and *tamassuk*).¹⁷ In another *hukm* (in 1619), she instructed Ganga Bai, to release all the persons in her confinement and send them to the Royal court. She even tells her to avoid going near the mentioned village.¹⁸ She used to send *khilats* to officers assuring of the royal bounty, such as the one sent to Raja Jai Singh.¹⁹ She was careful that no one flouts the royal orders and upsets the functioning of the government. The *hukms* made specific mention of the noble's duty to faithfully communicate everything to the royal court and to obey the royal orders.²⁰

Nur Jahan's reputation for wielding power at the court was quite popular, as people approached her with their problems hoping for redress. Hakim

7. Tuzuk, p.159

8. Ibid., p.62.

9. Ibid., pp.39, 61-62.

10. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the court of the Great Mogul (1615-1619)*, ed. Wiliam Foster, London: Hakluyt Society, 1899, pp.218,349 426.

11. William Foster, *Letters to East India Company from its servant in the East*, Vol.3, London, 1899, p.64.

12. Mutamid Khan, "Handling down the sovereignty to Nur Jahan he now need only a ser of meat and a cup of wine" seems quite an incorrect statement.

13. Tuzuk, p.342.

14. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India or Remonstrantie*, tr.W.H.Moreland and P.Geyl, Cambridge, 1925, p.56.

15 Tuzuk, p.339.

16. S.A.I.Tirmizi, *Mughal documents (1526-1627)*, Delhi, Vol.1, 1989, p.103.

17. Ibid, p.117.

18. Ibid, p.111.

19. Ibid, p.128.

20. Ibid, p.133.

Ruhullah, A royal physician submitted a petition to the Empress as he had not yet received the possession of the villages granted to him in madad-i-maash by the royal farman. She issued a hukm instructing the officer to immediately deliver possession of the two villages to the Hakim and that there should be no such complaint in future.²¹ She also ordered hukms to the officials of her jagirs (Akbarabad and Surat) to obey Jahangir's farman (of 1624) and to desist from levying unauthorised cesses on the Englishmen, as they had complained to her about this. Jahangir's farman had exempted them from all other road tolls once they had paid their usual customs at Surat or Bharoach.²² The crimes of the rebel were also pardoned when they applied to Nur Jahan Begum, expressing their repentance and shame.²³

The power and prestige of Nur Jahan at the court was also supported by her strong financial base that went beyond the courtly grants.²⁴ Besides, the large wealth at her disposal, lavished by her husband, received as nazr or offerings from the elite who wished to win her favour, she also had her income from trade and commercial activities.²⁵

Rituals of power at Jahangir's court

This description of exercise of power matches well with the ritualistic aspect of sovereignty wielded at the court and beyond. She used to sit on Jharokha²⁶ from where the nobles used to perform the Qurnish. Her name was included on the coins struck in the empire.²⁷ Jahangir even ordered that her drums and orchestra should be sounded after those of the king, a privilege never given to any other lady prior to Nur Jahan.²⁸ The noble (Mirza Nathan) received a robe of honour from her and in return, presented a gift of 42,000 rupees.²⁹ She received gifts from foreign rulers (like mother of ruler of Turan) and also sent gifts in return.³⁰ The court being the marked site for the display of sovereignty, the queen participated in the rituals while wielding power at the court.

Besides, the rituals performed with the ruling elite was for display at the court, queen also communicated her power to the laity through a number of other institutions. The queen engaged in rituals, some in continuance of the previous traditions by which the queens were expected to engage in charities, organize feasts etc. Though the scale of these feasts now assumed enormous proportions. There were also fresh rituals observed at the court. There were not only the usual marriage celebrations, but the feasts now were organized also for political victories, for striking alliances etc. usually by the queen with much more fanfare. She gave Prince Parwiz a dress of honour, a horse and an elephant when he was sent by Jahangir to overthrow Prince Khurram.³¹

Jahangir gives details of Nur Jahan organizing the feasts on various occasions. He praised the feasts organized by Nur Jahan (in 1617) on the occasion of Shab-i Barat, saying that such a wonderful feast was never arranged before.³² Organising feasts and such grand celebrations were seen as accomplishment of the empire. Such feasts had great significance for the empire as Jahangir mentions the scale and spending in these festivities with great pride. This also indicates the magnificent stature the queen assumed next to King that brought out the grandeur of the state.

Nur Jahan's participation was not limited to the arrangement of feasts and distribution of gifts. She also performed hunting as a major ritual. The prowess and exertions of the emperor exhibited in a shoot, and recounted in texts, would have inspire awe among the subjects- a ritual being well laid out as the empire sought to frame its distinct masculine code.³⁴ In this Jahangir was keen to elaborate Nur Jahan's talent for shooting and ascribed 'masculine' qualities to her, as these became important in exercise of sovereignty.

21. Ibid, p.135.

22. Farhat Hasan, 'Two official documents of Jahangir's reign relating to the English East India Company', PIHC, 1985, Amritsar, pp.333-334.

23. Muhammad Hadi, The Jahangirnama, tr. and ed. annotated by Wheeler M. Thakston, New York, 1999, pp.413-414.

24. Nur Jahan had a vast Jagirs about which Jahangir has mentioned in Tuzuk, like her jagir of Ramsar and Pargana of Toda.

25. Jahangir's India, p.3.

26. Khwaja Kamgar Husaini, Maasir-i-Jahangiri, ed. Azra Alvi, Bombay, 1978, p.144.

27. Ibid, p.144.

28. Tuzuk, p.342.

29. Cf. John F. Richards, The Mughal Empire, Cambridge, 1993, p.108.

30. Tuzuk, p.330.

31. Ibid., P.361.

32. Ibid., p.190.

33. Rosalind O' Hanlon, 'Kingdom Household and Body: History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar', in Modern Asian Studies, Cambridge, Vol.41:5, 2007, pp. 896, 901, 902, 906, 907.

34. Tuzuk, p.279.



Fig. 7: An imaginary depiction of Nur Jahan with a gun

He writes, “Mirza Rustam, who after me is unequalled in shooting, has several times missed three or four shots from an elephant. Yet Nur Jahan Begum so hit the tiger with one shot that it was immediately killed.”³⁵ He mentions every time Nur Jahan accompanied him on hunts. In 1619, Jahangir ordered Nur Jahan to shoot the tiger which was endangering the ryots, as at that time he had taken a vow that he would not injure any living thing with his own hands. Jahangir thus extends Nur Jahan a share in the show of power.³⁶

Despite the space allowed to Nur Jahan in the masculine display of power, certain aspects of sovereignty were traditionally assigned to the women of the imperial family- one being the acts of

piety. The queen could be seen with distinct feminine functions and duties to the empire. Perhaps, the exercise of power needed to be legitimated with public display of piety. The chronicles report of the charities by the queen.³⁷ She arranged for marriage of orphan girls and gives them their wedding portion. *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri* informs us that during her reign no less than 500 orphan girls were thus married.³⁸ She released the slave girls of her establishment marrying them to *ahadis*.³⁹ She also made arrangements for the pilgrims of Haj and Karbala.⁴⁰

She constructed various sarais for the accommodation of travellers, like Nur Mahal Sarai, in the district of Nur Mahal, made up of stone which could accommodate 500 horse and 2 to 3000 people.⁴¹ The other sarai is also known as Nur Sarai that found its mention in *Tuzuk*.⁴² She built the *Pathar Masjid* (Stone Mosque) in Srinagar⁴³ and a *baoli* by the name of *Jahalar Baoli*, two miles north of Bayana.⁴⁴ When otherwise the empress in *purdah* remained distant from the laity, these public works symbolized empress' presence in the public domain. Queen thus laid out numerous gardens. In Kashmir valley- she had the, *Achabal* and *Vernag* garden.⁴⁵ *Moti Bagh*, was also erected by her,⁴⁶ and a Nur Sarai garden in *Jalandhar*.⁴⁷ She ordered the construction of the tomb of *Itimadud-daulah* in *Agra*⁴⁸ and tomb of *Jahangir* in *Shahadra*, *Lahore*.⁴⁹

The other area of feminine contribution was in aesthetic planning and ornamentation of the court/harem life, as these gave a distinct style and grandeur to the establishment. She invented new styles in dressing, costumes, jewellery and perfumes. She started the use of '*farsh-i-chandni* (white carpet) used by both, rich and poor. Besides, many perfumes were invented by her. *Jahangir* mentions *itr-i-Jahangiri* and that she also invented some perfumes affordable at low price.⁵⁰

35. *Ibid*, p.269.

36. Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnamah-i Jahangiri*, ed. Mawlawis Abdul Haii, and Ahmad Ali, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1865, p.57.

37. *Ibid*.

38. Cf. Shadab Bano, 'Women Slaves in Medieval India', PIHC, Bareilly, 2005, p.317.

39. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhabu-l-lubab*, ed. Maulavi Kabirud-din Ahmed, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1868, Vol.1, p.269.. 40.

Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia (1608-67)*, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, London, Hakluyt Society, 1914, Vol.2, p.78.

41. *Tuzuk*, p.232.

42. Cf. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal ladies and their contributions*, New Delhi, 2005, p.199.

43. *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, p.101.

44. Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire (1656-1668)*, tr. Archibald Constable, London, 1891, pp.413-414.

45. *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, Vol.2, p.79.

46. Ellison Banks Findly: *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India*, Oxford, 1993, p.229.

47. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, New Delhi, 1876, Vol.2, pp.305-306.

48. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Bombay, 1969, p.100.

59. *Muntakhabu-l-lubab*, p.269.

50. *Ibid*.

She designed a dress called Badla. Its heavy variety was known by the name of the owner of the karkhana, whereas the light ones were called “Nur-Mahli”. It was of such fine quality and so cheap that the costumes of brides and bridegrooms got ready in just 15-20 rupees.

The paper thus brings out the real sovereignty exercised by a queen, allowed by the dynamics of seventeenth century empire, and the organization of rituals important for the exercise of sovereignty. Her public presence and wielding of power thus need not be seen as simple aberration from the previous scheme of politics. We find continuation of certain practices from the empire as carved by Akbar and also there is an element of continuity of the Central Asian tradition in her emergence to power as we find royal ladies were granted much liberty and public visibility as they rode on horses and go for hunt. Harem as a sacrosanct space and strict purdah continued, rather rituals of purdah contributed in striking awe for the empire. Nur Jahan's public roles, thus did not emerge simply from a favourite wife with unbound powers breaking all previous mould. Her exceptionality also needs to be seen in the role seventeenth century empire offered to imperial ladies, which she performed with astute capacity.

Surveying a Noble's Architectural Enterprise: A Tomb, Tank and Water Pavilion at Etmadpur, District Agra

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Fig. 8: Water Pavilion at Etmadpur, Agra

Etmadpur, the place where the present site named 'Burhia ka taal' stands is presently a tehsil in Agra district and it is 12 Miles, East-North-East of Agra, on the Agra to Ferozabad road.¹ The name of the place is after the name of its founder, who was a Khwajasara (eunuch), named Itimad Khan.² He was a Noble of Akbar's era. ³ The place Itimadpur is located close to Agra.

One importance of the site under study is due to the fact that it represents the position of a eunuch or the Khwajasara in the social circle of the Mughals. Although this is not the only example of a structure built or patronised by a Khwajasara, Tavernier, who visited India in Shah Jahan's reign informs us-

“As for the tombs which are in Agra and its environs, there are some which are very beautiful, and there is not one of the eunuchs in the king's harem who is not ambitious to have a magnificent tomb built for himself. When they have amassed large sums they earnestly desire to go to Mecca, and to take with them rich presents, but the Great Moghul, who does not wish the money to leave his country, very seldom grants them permission; and consequently, not knowing what to do with their wealth, they expend the greater part of it in these burying places, in order to leave some monument to their names.”⁴

We come across another example of a eunuch named

1 Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74

2 Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13

3 Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., patna, 1979, pp.708-09

4 Tavernier, Jean baptiste, Travels in India, vol 1,ed. Translated from the original by V.Ball, London,1889, p.109

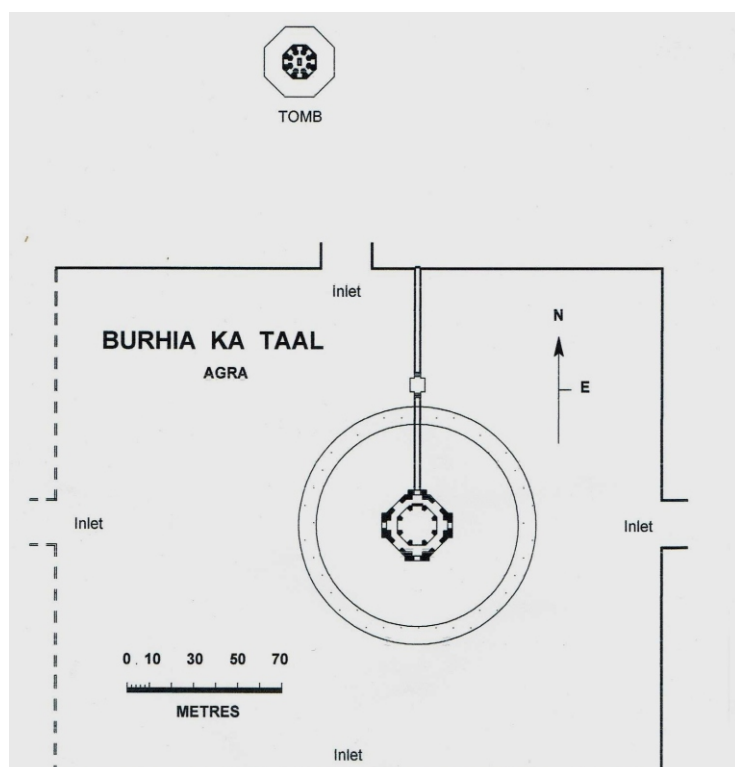


Fig. 9: Ground plan of Structures at Etmadpur, Agra

Firuz Khan, whose octagonal tomb stands in the near vicinity of Agra.⁵ Firuz Khan, a khwajasara, served the Mughal emperor Jahangir and later joined services under Shah Jahan and was responsible for the imperial harem until his death in 1647 or 1648.⁶ The Mausoleum or the tomb of khwajasara Firuz Khan is also located in close reach to Agra, just south of Agra on the Dholpur road.⁷ While contemporary sources mentions a garden he constructed on the banks of Jhelum, ⁸ but he is also remembered today for his beautiful octagonal tomb which he built near a large tank. ⁹ Thus there are many such examples like this which reflect the position of a khwajasara in the Mughal society and the site in Etmadpur is also a perfect example of this kind.

The site in Etmadpur, with its water tank, 'Itimad Khan ka talao' ¹⁰ as the original or contemporary sources name it and now is famous as 'Burhia ka tal', has a water pavilion in the centre of this tank and to the north of it, at a little distance, lies the mausoleum or the tomb of Itimad Khan. Itimad Khan Khwajasara, whose real name was Phul Malik or khawaja Phul Malik before serving the Mughal emperor Akbar had earlier served the son of Sher Shah, Salim Shah Sur (1545-1553). In the reign of Salim Shah, he on account of his honesty received the title of 'Muhammad Khan'.¹¹ When the Afghans fell from power, he was enrolled among the servants of Akbar.¹²

We get a lot of information on his career and on his life from a number of contemporary sources. Abul Fazl in his Akbarnama writes that, he (khawaja Phul Malik) on account of his integrity had been distinguished during the rule of Salim Khan, the son of Sher Khan the Afghan, by the title of Muhammad Khan.¹³

Abul Fazl also mentions Itimad Khan in the list of Akbar's grantees.¹⁴ Apart from the works of Abul Fazl we get a lot information on Itimad Khan's career, life and death from the other contemporary sources like 'Maasir ul Umara' of Shahnawaz Khan and 'Zakhirat ul khawanin' of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari.

We are informed that in the 7th year of Akbar's reign in 1563, after the murder of Shamsuddin Muhammad Atgah Khan, ¹⁵ who was a foster father of Akbar, when Akbar realised the condition of revenue department, which was by then a den of thieves,¹⁶ he appointed him (khawaja Muhammad Khan) as the in-charge of revenue department to

5 Asher, Catherine B., *The New Cambridge History of India- Architecture of Mughal India*, Cambridge University press, Delhi, 1995, p.231

6 Ibid, p.231

7 Ibid, p.231

8 Ibid, p.231

9 Ibid, p.231

10 Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1647*, Vol II- Travels in Asia, 1628-1634, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Hakluyt Society, 1914, p.84

11 Shahnawaz Khan, *Maasir ul Umara*, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

12 Ibid, pp.708-709

13 Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, text II, original pp. 178-179, or see *Akbarnama*, vol. II, translation by H. Beveridge, page 276-77

14 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, vol 1, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13, see footnote 1.

15 Shahnawaz Khan, *Maasir ul Umara*, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

16 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, vol 1, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13, see footnote 1.

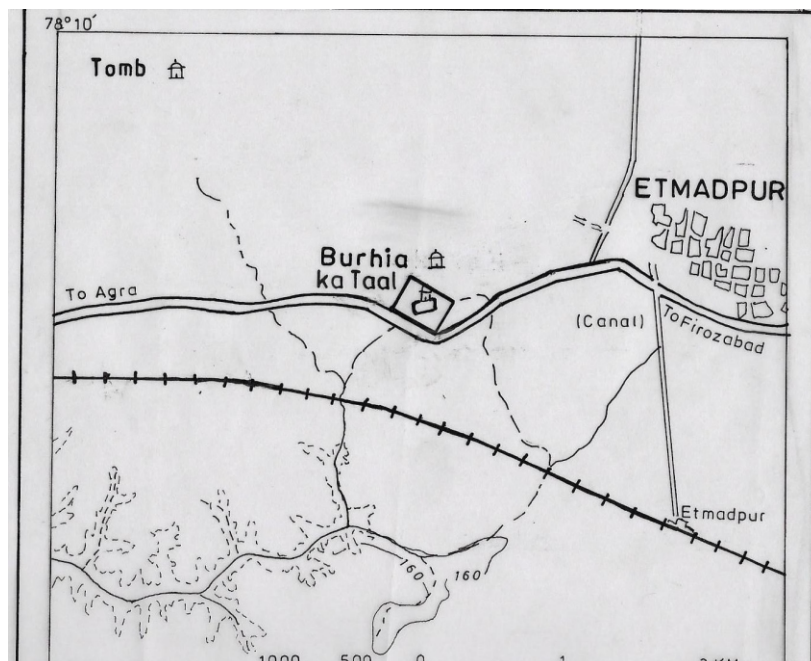


Fig. 10: Map showing Etmadpur and its topography

remodel the finances.¹⁷ Khawaja Phul Malik or 'Muhammad Khan' the title which was given to him by Salim Shah Sur appears to have fulfilled his duties to Akbar's satisfaction.¹⁸ Akbar then gave him the title of 'Itimad Khan' and a rank of 1000.¹⁹

In the 9th year of Akbar's reign in 1565, Itimad Khan conveyed the daughter of Miran Mubarak Shah, the king of Khandesh (1535-1556), to Akbar's harem.²⁰ We are further informed that he took part in the conquest of Bengal, where he distinguished himself.²¹ He was then appointed for a time in

Bengal along with Khan-i Khanan Munim Khan and Khan Jahan Turkman, and did excellent service there.²²

Contemporary sources tell us that in the 22nd year of Akbar's reign, in 1576, Itimad Khan was appointed as Governor of Bhakkar.²³ The author of 'Maasir ul Umara' Shahnawaz Khan writes that, "Itimad Khan went off from Dipalpur in Malwa to take charge of Bhakkar on the death of Saiyid Muhammad Mir 'Adal."²⁴ We are then informed by the same source that Itimad Khan by his energy led a force to Sehwan in a battle and was Victorious.²⁵ He came back after concluding peace.²⁶ The author of Zakhirat ul khawanin, Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, who was also a native of Bhakkar writes that Itimad Khan Khwajasara rose to the mansab of 3000.

²⁷ Shaikh Farid Bhakkari also informs us that the Bhakkar Sarkar was granted in his fief.²⁸

Itimad Khan is said to have founded Itimadpur at a distance of 6 kos from Agra and built there a big water tank and a mansion for himself.²⁹ He also constructed his own mausoleum there in his life where he lies buried.³⁰ Not only Zakhirat ul Khawanin but other contemporary sources like Ain i Akbari, informs the same that Itimad Khan founded Itimadpur 6 cos from Agra and informs about the structures he patronised.³¹

¹⁷ Ibid, p.13, see footnote 1.

¹⁸ Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol 1, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13

¹⁹ Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol. 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

²⁰ Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., patna, 1979, pp.708-09

²¹ Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13, see footnote 1.

²² Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., patna, 1979, pp.708-09

²³ Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol 1, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13, see footnote 1.

²⁴ Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

²⁵ Ibid, pp.708-09

²⁶ Ibid, pp.708-09

²⁷ Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, Zakhirat-ul- Khawanin, ed- Moinul Haque, Karachi, 3 Volumes, 1970 (trans. Ziauddin Desai in two parts as The Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari (Vol. I), Delhi, 1993 and Nobility under the Great Mughals (Vol. II), Delhi, 2003. 1970, Vol. I, p. 216

²⁸ Ibid, p.216

²⁹ Ibid, p.216

³⁰ Ibid, p.216

³¹ Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.473; also see, Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, original pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

Within 2 years of his posting at Bhakkar Itimad Khan met his end.³² When in 1578 Akbar's presence was felt in Punjab, Itimad Khan wanted to serve him, in order to do so he called his soldiers for the branding of their horses.³³ He also in order to equip his contingent collected his rents and out standings with much harshness.³⁴

The author of Zakhirat ul Khawanin states that he also did not behaved well with saintly persons and delayed payment of dues of his soldiers.³⁵ One day when one of his soldiers, whose name was Maqsud Ali requested his case he insulted him.³⁶ Maqsud Ali who had only one eye was replied harshly by Itimad Khan that one should urinate in his blind eye.³⁷ Maqsud on this humiliation in anger immediately drew his dagger and struck it in the stomach of Itimad Khan, so hard that he died on the spot.³⁸ Itimad Khan, thus met such a tragic end. Abul Fazl in his Ain-i Akbari although mentions the same account but adds in the end that according to another account, Itimad was murdered by Maqsud, while getting up from his bed. ³⁹



The site of Etmadpur that was patronised by Itimad Khan Khwajasara, lies 27o 13' north latitude, 78 o 12' east longitude on the east of Agra about 12 miles

from Agra, on the Agra to Firozabad road. The site which is popularly known as 'Burhia ka Tal' because of a local legend that some old woman lived here in the troubled days of 'Jats' and Maratha rule and she was sort of a thug, who used to attack and rob small body of travellers passing by the site.⁴⁰ However it has been stated and believed that due to the findings of many ancient Buddhist sculptures from the site,⁴¹ it must have been called as Bodhi ka taal and the term Burhia is the corrupted term for Bodhi.⁴² Though when, Peter Mundy, who was a British merchant and traveller came across the site in 1632, he describes it by the name 'Etemad ca talao'⁴³ thus it seems that during the Mughal Era the site was popular by its original name and the name might have changed during the British period because of the local legends.⁴⁴

On reaching the site one can easily, from a distance, view a double storey octagonal structure surmounted by a dome. This Structure is the water pavilion of Itimad Khan. The Structure itself is built on a raised octagonal platform and lies in the middle of the square water tank.⁴⁵ The thick masonry walls of the water tanks are also clearly visible on the eastern side and on the northern side, though at some places it is in ruins. Particularly on the western side and the north western side it's hard to trace the ruins of the wall of the tank. The thick masonry walls of

32 Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.473

33 Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, orginal pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

34 Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.13, see footnote 1.

35 Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, Zakhirat-ul- Khawanin, ed- Moinul Haque, Karachi, 3 Volumes, 1970 (trans. Ziauddin Desai in two parts as The Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari (Vol. I), Delhi, 1993 and Nobility under the Great Mughals (Vol. II), Delhi, 2003. 1970, Vol. I, p. 216

36 Shahnawaz khan, Maasir ul Umara, orginal pp.88-90, vol 1, Translated by H.Beveridge, 1st reprint ed., Patna, 1979, pp.708-09

37 Ibid, pp.708-09

38 Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, Zakhirat-ul- Khawanin, ed- Moinul Haque, Karachi, 3 Volumes, 1970 (trans. Ziauddin Desai in two parts as The Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari (Vol. I), Delhi, 1993 and Nobility Under the Great Mughals (Vol. II), Delhi, 2003. 1970, Vol. I, p. 216

39 Abul Fazl, Ain-i Akbari, vol I, Translated by H.Blochmann, 3rd reprint edition, oriental books reprint corporation, Delhi, 1977, p.473

40 Nevill,.H.R., Agra: A Gazetteer, vol viii of the District Gazetteer of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, 1905, Allahabad, p.282

41 For the detailed list of Buddhist findings see Carlleyle, A.C.L, Archaeological Survey of India report for the year 1871-72, Vol .4, report on Agra with notices of some neibouring places, Indological Book house, Varanasi, 1966, pp.207-208

42 Nevill,.H.R., Agra: A Gazetteer, vol viii of the District Gazetteer of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, 1905, Allahabad, p.282

43 Mundy, peter, The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia,1608-1647, Vol II- Travels in Asia, 1628-1634, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Hakluyt Society, 1914, p.84

44 Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74; also see- Nevill,.H.R., Agra: A Gazetteer, vol viii of the District Gazetteer of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, 1905, Allahabad, p.282

45 Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74

the water tanks are also clearly visible on the eastern side and on the northern side, though at some places it is in ruins. Particularly on the western side and the north western side it's hard to trace the ruins of the wall of the tank.

The water pavilion is reached only from the northern side of the tank by a causeway.⁴⁶ The causeway is in solid state and had 21 arches underneath it.⁴⁷ It connects the outer side of the tank to the water pavilion. Outside the northern boundary of the water tank at little distance lays the tomb of Itimad Khan,⁴⁸ which is exactly same in design as that of the first storey of the water pavilion⁴⁹ but the difference is that it is a single storey octagonal structure.⁵⁰

Peter Mundy notices the structure and has described Itimad Khan's water pavilion, the tank and the causeway while on his journey from Agra to Patna. Mundy in his travels writes-

"The 9th August 1632- In the way hither (perozabad [ferozabad] 7 course) is a faire Tanck (at itimadpur) four square, called Etemad ca talao (Itimad ka Talao), with a faire building in the midst and a bridge to goe to it. In theis Taloes (talao) or Tancks, Gardens, Tombes, Saraes (sarai), Beaulis (baoli) or deepe wells, Theis Contrie people bestowe great Cost and very curious in (particular about) them during their lives; but the founders being dead, if they goe to ruyne, they are seldome repaired, for here noe man enjoys lands or anything els but during Kings pleasure. This Tanck is accompted one of the most auntient in India." ⁵¹

The description of Peter Mundy provides the details of the structure after almost 50 years of the death of Itimad Khan.

H.R. Nevill's description of Itimadpur's structures,⁵² in the 'Agra District Gazetteers'

published in 1905, is also an important documentation of the site. Nevill writes that the place derives its name from Itimad Khan, who was eunuch of the court of Akbar, who was appointed to remodel the financial arrangements. Nevill then after providing a short summary of Itimad Khan's career describes the site as having a mosque, a mausoleum and a large masonry tank, the sides of which are seven to eight hundred feet in length. He further describes that in the centre of the tank, which lies about a mile to the west of the main site (Etmadpur area), is a two-storied octagonal building surmounted by a dome, which is approached by a causeway raised on 21 arches leading from the north east side. He provides the details by stating that near the approach stands the tomb. He further informs that the tank is known as 'Burhia ka talao' and then provides the account of the local legends. He was however of the view that the name of the tank is corruption of Bodi, owing to the discovery of several Buddhist sculptures that have been found near the area.⁵³

A. Fuhrer also describes the site and tells us that to the west of the town (Etmadpur) is a large square masonry tank, in the centre of which there is a two storied octagonal building surmounted by a dome. He then describes the causeway and the tomb of Itimad Khan and is of the view that the name 'Burhia ka talao' is possibly a corruption for Buddhi or Bodhi tal.

A.C.L. Carlleyle's, Archaeological Survey of India report on Agra with notices of some neighbouring places also provides a good deal of information on the water pavilion and the rest of structures. Carlleyle's report also provides a list of certain small sculptures found in the mud at the bottom of the 'Burhiya ka tal', as these sculptures were of Buddhist symbols and of seated Buddha's posture because of which Carlleyle's opinion was that this name Buriya

⁴⁶ Carlleyle, A.C.L, Archaeological Survey of India report for the year 1871-72, Vol .4, report on Agra with notices of some neighbouring places, Indological Book house, Varanasi, 1966, pp.207

⁴⁷ Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74

⁴⁸ Nevill, H.R., Agra: A Gazetteer, vol viii of the District Gazetteer of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, 1905, Allahabad, p.282

⁴⁹ Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.74

⁵¹ Mundy, Peter, The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1647, Vol II- Travels in Asia, 1628-1634, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Hakluyt Society, 1914, p.84

⁵² Nevill, H.R., Agra: A Gazetteer, vol viii of the District Gazetteer of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, 1905, Allahabad, p.282

⁵³ Ibid, p.282

⁵⁴ Fuhrer, A., The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Vol- II, Archaeological Survey of India, Allahabad, 1891, p.74



Fig. 11: Etmadpur as depicted in paintings from colonial period

was the corruption of Buddhi or Bodhi Tal, which according to him might have signified either the Buddhist tank, or the tank of the Bodhi tree.⁵⁵

Amongst the modern writers Ebba Koch, while describing the octagonal structures of Akbar's era gives a brief note on Itimad Khan's water palace. She states that "a simpler variant (of the octagonal structures) is the water palace of Itimad Khan, now called 'Burhia ka Tal', at Etmadpur (Itimadpur) east of Agra (before 1578)". She, while describing the tomb of 'Tambulan Begum' an octagonal structure in the 'Khusrau Bagh' at Allahabad, compares the structure with water palace of Itimad Khan and writes- "Among the already discussed octagonal versions of the takhtgah or platform tomb may, in the wildest sense, also be counted the tomb of 'Tambulan Begum', in the Khusrau Bagh at Allahabad. The ground floor has the shape of an octagonal podium housing a cruciform chamber, the superstructure consists of a single octagonal domed kiosk. The concept almost literally repeats that of the earlier water pavilion at Etmadpur."⁵⁶

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Having established the arguments that have already been made regarding the structures at Etmadpur, it

would suffice here to give a detailed description of the architectural features of the tomb, the tank and the water pavilion. The site has been surveyed thoroughly and the following details have been noted. On reaching the site just beside the narrow road the southern walls of the tank are clearly visible. Thick masonry walls about 3mtr high, in good condition, having a broad wide opening of 19.80mtrs seems to be a big inlet and a similar inlet on the eastern side is also traced which is 20.50 metre wide. These two inlets or so called ghats, which is the term used by the locals for these inlets, seem to be a later construction, probably of the British period. While it is clear by looking at the high mud mounds on the north-western and western side of the tank that this is an artificial tank created by excavating the mud and depositing it on the northern-western and western sides.

The total area of the tank measures 274 x 230mtrs, thus not a perfect square but the sources almost all of them state the tank area to be a square and if we view the satellite image of the structure the area appears to be a square. The absence of well preserved boundary walls of the tank on western and north western side may be used as pointers to suggest that the shape of the tank changed over a course of time. The inlets are also not traceable on the western side.

⁵⁵ Carlleyle, A.C.L, Archaeological Survey of India report for the year 1871-72, Vol .4, report on Agra with notices of some neighbouring places, Indological Book house, Varanasi, 1966, pp.207-208

⁵⁶ Koch,Ebba, Mughal Architture-an outline of its history and development(1526-1858),Reprint 3ed., Delhi, 2014, p.46

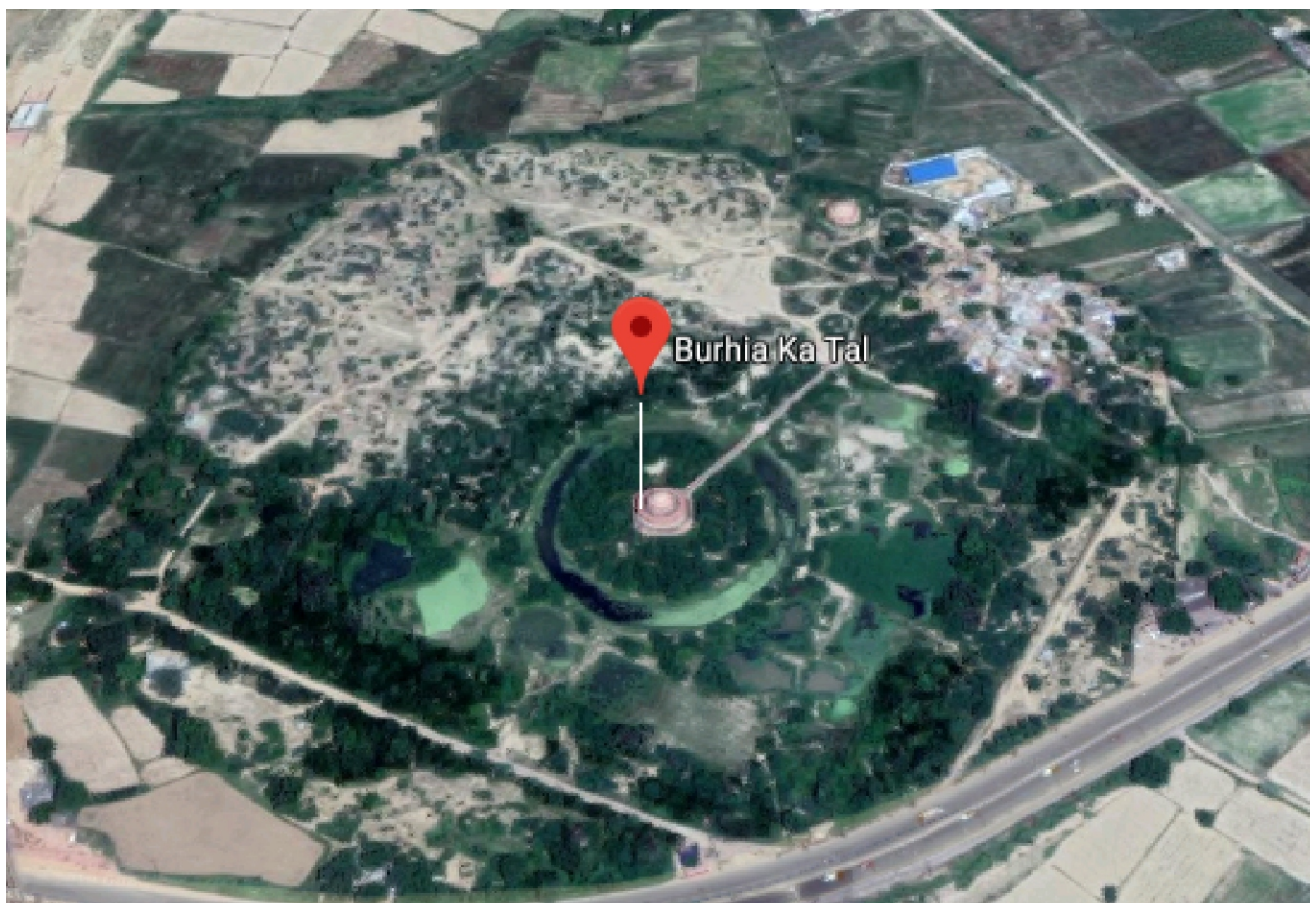


Fig. 12: Satellite view of Etmadpur

As per the local traditions the tank had four ghats and there use to be water in the tank in earlier times and mallahs or boat riders use to reside here. These reports are also been backed by Hari Singh who is the local in-charge assigned by A.S.I for the structure since 2012 and unofficially he has been looking after the site since 2003. Hari Singh claims that there were four ghats for public use and also that the source of water for this tank was on the north western side.

It seems strange for a noble's private property to have ghats for public use. Furthermore the eastern boundary and northern boundary appears to be a renovation work of the British period. The walls of the water tank also have sluices for water inlets. Thus it can be argued that the surviving outer walls might have been a later addition to the original square water tank built by Itimad Khan. On the North-western side traces of original boundary of the tank can be traced in ruins.

The important question that arises is what was the source of water for the tank and for that by looking at the close up view of the map of Etmadpur we come across a narrow unidentified dried stream which was a tributary of Yamuna and comes to the structure and enters it from the south western side and also from the north eastern side. Thus the inlets on either of these sides could have served as source of water for the tank if there must have been similar openings on all four sides in the original tank boundary; hence

this is a matter of speculation if this stream was used as a water source for the tank. In that case there is another possibility that the tank was supplied water from the north western and from the western side as there is high rising land there, where rain water would have been stored and then through channels brought to the lake. The water source for the tank thus had these two possible explanations. Presently the tank is in a dry state with traces of shallow water at places, where this fruit 'Singhara' or the water chestnut grows.

In the centre of the tank stands the water palace or the water pavilion of Itimad Khan. Water pavilion of Itimad Khan is a beautiful double storied octagonal structure built on a raised octagonal platform, which lies in the middle of the water tank. Each side of the platform on which this structure stands measures 11.20 metres and in the centre of it on an 80cm high plinth stands the structure. The octagonal platform is reached by or connected with a causeway. The causeway is coming from the northern side of the structure and connects the northern boundary of the tank with the central octagonal platform on which the water pavilion is built.

Causeway is in good condition, and comprises of 21 arches for the flow of water. The causeway is 3mtrs wide including its side walls or boundary which is 50cms thick on both sides. The height of this boundary wall of the causeway is about 75cms.

In the middle of the causeway there is a rectangular platform which measures 6.25x3.5metres. From there moving further towards the structure there are 3 stairs to come down to the causeway from there the causeway runs straight to the raised octagonal platform and from here it measures 47.60metres. The size of the brick used in the construction of the causeway measures 22x10cms or .22x.10mtrs.

At the end of the causeway and just before the raised octagonal platform, narrow staircases lead to the ground beneath the causeway and which once would have led to the water. The raised octagonal platform of which each side measures 11.20metres also had stairs on alternate sides which once must have given access to the water of the tank.

The main structure of the water pavilion, which is a double storied octagonal structure surmounted by a dome. It is built on an 80cm high plinth. Each side of the first storey measures 7.40mtrs and all sides have wide arched entrances. Each arched entrance is 2.55metre wide from the inner side and including its sides it measures 2.90mtrs. Each facade also has on its exteriors, niches, recessed panels and embedded designs. Rectangular designs on the sides of the arches are also found. On the exterior on all sides of the first storey slanting eaves or chajja's are also traced, to support these eaves beautiful brackets are made with geometrical carvings and designs. The exterior of the second storey too has wide arched opening on each facade and the exterior of the facade is covered by niches. Most striking feature of the interior of the second storey is the graffitis on the walls which are mostly of British period. The walls are filled with such graffiti's. Some are written in Urdu but mostly in English and this shows that the structure was in use in the British period.

The mausoleum or tomb of Itimad Khan, the structure lies to the north of the water palace outside the northern boundary of the tank. The distance between the tomb and the northern boundary of the tank is 67.50mtrs. The exterior of the structure is a copy in design of that of the water pavilion the only difference being it is a single storied octagonal structure.

The structures at Etmadpur as analysed in this paper are an interesting specimen of building activity of nobles during the period of Akbar. Strong hints of Afghan influence on the structure suggest that the Architectural endeavors still had influence of the preceding Sur dynasty which eventually changed. The establishment is also a comment on the social and economic status and position of a eunuch despite his disadvantage of being non-man in a patriarchal setup.

Book Review

Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture

The Delhi Sultanate and its Times by Mohammad Habib, edited by Irfan Habib, 2016

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Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture is an assortment of two monographs and six articles of Mohammad Habib in the form of a book. The writings situate Mohammad Habib, the premier historian of medieval India in his attempt to historicize Medieval history beyond just history of kings towards polity and culture of the Sultanate. The varied themes in themselves establish the innovative approach that the book yields, namely, the evaluation of Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin, socio-Cultural aspects of the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, an account on Amir Khusrau, an estimate of Ziauddin Barani's thought, study of Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud as a Historical personality and the assessment of Sufi records on their genuinity.

The introduction to the book by Irfan Habib gives an estimate of the collection, the author's ambitions and impulses in the nature of themes he chose, his political affiliation to Congress for the Nationalist cause, the influence of Marxist Literature on his works in the shift of approach from hagiological elation of kings towards the history of the oppressed. The introduction also numbers the works and projects that Mohammad Habib took to enrich the Study of Sultanate, like the biography of Amir Khusrau or the translation of Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi of Zia Barani.

Over View

The Present and the Past

Our Approach to History

The first part of this book is the Presidential Address delivered by Mohammad Habib in Indian History Congress, Bombay, 1947 which reflects his deep regard for Mahatma Gandhi and Indian National Congress. The address reflects his deep angst against the communal card played by the British to incite religious strife among Indians. He seeks refuge in the fact that the history of India, a country which has been one and indivisible will continue to be so and not break on religious or community basis.

He provides the remedy for Indian State to posit National Community as opposed to communal ones. The second portion of his lecture covers his ideas on the duty of historians. He admits that history can never be free of the 'pragmatic elements' because gaps in narrative have to be filled by some

hypothesis. He claims history to be a Normative Science, that is historians concern not just with facts but with judgement. He criticises State intervention in interpretation of History as "one of the most effective means of sabotaging democracy" which is of extreme importance in the present times. Lastly he points towards 'freeing' history of our preoccupation with higher classes towards need of historical investigation of family struggles and Peasants.

Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin

Forming chapter 2 of the volume is Mohammad Habib's detailed monograph on career and estimate of Sultan Mahmud published in 1927. A project which he took upon because the orthodox sections posited Mahmud as 'the saviour of Islam and slayer of non Muslims' a faulty interpretation which was a threat to national unity. The work is a direct contestation to that view, and has in depth accessed the 'phenomenon' that Mahmud was.

Part 1

Covers the conditions that prevailed in the 10th and 12th Centuries in the Muslim world towards a spiritual decline in Islam, fall of Caliphate, rise of minor dynasties, dogmatic and racial differences among the doctrine of Islam and the rise of Turks.

Part 2

An estimate of the career and conquests of Sultan Mahmud, in a rational manner. The account highlights how Mahmud fought Hindus and Muslims alike for the extension his empire, wrongly deemed as the 'holy warrior' Mahmud was essentially a military genius who claimed some of the finest military achievements in Hindustan.

And even if the sharia was invoked to give religious justification for temple desecration and plunder, Mahmud's exploits in essence, to the disgust of Indians did more harm to the cause of Islam than good. His Hindu opponents were aware his actions were economic. The work establishes Mahmud neither as the arch-fanatic nor the Islam rescuer that he was to some, but an able commander and conqueror. The work further covers the conflict of succession on his death followed by the decline of Kingdom of Ghaznin owing to the rise of the Seljuks and internal discord.

The Delhi Sultanate in History

Chapter 3 explains the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in terms of social and political constructs in terms of arrival of Islam in Ajam. The writing displays considerable Marxist influence on Habib's explanation of socio-political aspects of Sultanate. In terms of role of Islamic Revolution he opines that only Marx and Engels can explain this beyond 'group values and class values'. Religion always starts from working class but ultimately proceeds to creating a governing class within the creed.

He has classified the Ghorian arrival and its effect on North India as the 'Urban Revolution', he picks up the static caste divided pre-Ghorian India headed for a shift in public opinion seen in high level of manufacturing activity achieved by equal civic life for working class. The rise of Delhi as an Urban capital was unparalleled in Asian world.

Further he ascribed 'Rural Revolution' as part of Sultan Alauddin Khilji's indictment against oppressive middle men in rural agricultural setup. He qualifies the Khilji Sultan as 100% Indian whose sole objective was 'service to the people of God', a Sultan sans- family pedigree nor bound by Sharia.

Some Aspects of the Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate

Chapter 4 is part of the lecture delivered by Habib at Dr. K. M. Ashraf Memorial Lecture in 1966.

In the lecture, he discusses the foundation of Delhi Sultanate as a historical phenomenon in terms of State apparatus and social milieu of Muslim settlement in India. The fact that Turk exploits 'unified our country' and Sultanate must not be scene as a 'religious institution' but something that ultimately headed us towards 'Secular India'.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi

Chapter 5 contains the biography of Amir Khusrau penned by Habib in 1927. The poet is taken up as a medium to study society and culture of medieval India.

'No person of such comprehensive ability', quotes Maulana Shibli in praise for this prodigal achievement of Sultanate period. Habib gives a biographical sketch of Khusrau, details and quotes many of his works (Diwans and Masnavis) like the Panj Ganj for its poetic merit, Khazaintul Futuh, I'jaz i Khusravi for their historical value. The sketch also covers his relationship to the ruling class and his intellectual relationship and massive influence of Shaikh Nizami Uddin Auliya who he praises before

the Sultan in the doxology of his later Masnavis.

Life and Thought of Ziauddin Barani

Chapter 6 is an article published in Medieval India Quarterly, 1957 and 1958. The article covers biographical sketch, an account of his Literary works and his theories of kinship and state.

Habib rebuilds the biographical note on Barani chiefly from Amir Khurd's Siyarul Auliya. He critically examines the value of his works and concludes week chronology and fact verification in Barani's works. However, establishes a remarkable feat of memory displayed in works like Fatawa i Jahandari, Tarikh Baramaka, but it's Tarikh- i Firoz Shahi which truly highlights his calibre as a historian and stays unmatched as far as History of Sultanate period is concerned. The account also covers aspects of his life such as his 'fall' from court service during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughluq.

Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud of Delhi as a Historical Personality

Chapter 7 is an article published in the Islamic Culture, 1946, which is an account on the life and times of the Chishti Saint.

The account gives a biographical note of him based on Amir Hasan Sijzi's Fawa'id ul-Fuwad and other contemporary sources. An interesting narrative based on the encounter of Nasiruddin Mahmud with Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya which consequently led him to chose him his successor. The frequent tiffs and intrigues which occurred between Nasir- uddin Mahmud and the Delhi Sultans. And Shaikh's deep melancholy on the rapid decline of mystic ideals towards the mid 13 Century.

Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period

The last chapter in the volume was an article published in the Medieval India Quarterly, Aligarh, 1950, in this chapter the author has detailed the Chishti Mystic Records and has demarcated the Genuine works from the fabricated ones on the basis of comparative style of study and historical scrutiny. He has classified 9 Chishti works as genuine and 10 works to be fabrications and has given an account on each. He establishes the fabricated works and malfuzat on the basis of variance of principles from Shaikh's teachings and references to non-existent sources. He points to the need for critical reading of literature to establish reliable ones from forged.

An Estimate

This Collection of works of Mohammad Habib is of

Highest preeminence, at a time when the achievements of Sultanate Period are being 'othered' on communal grounds. The work is of high value to the reader who wonders for a 'scientific' and rational approach to interpreting Delhi Sultanate. The works reflect the style and training grasp of a scholar as dynamic and sincere both in Islamic thought and Medieval Indian History. His work on Sufi sources leaves the reader in awe of appreciation of his lasting contribution to the discipline of History for future researchers. Also, the author has been successful in his endeavour to establish History free from glorified narrative of Kings and nobles towards newer angles of studying Culture and Society of Medieval India.

News from the Department

International Conference on the theme

Commemorating Syed Ahmad Khan : A Historian, Intellectual and Man of Reason



Fig. 13: Prof. Irfan Habib delivering the inaugural address

Inaugural Session

A three-day International Seminar was organised by the Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University on 29 - 31 January, 2018. The seminar was themed 'Commemorating Syed Ahmad Khan : A Historian, Intellectual and Man of Reason', a host of delegates from leading universities from India and abroad participated in the seminar, emulating Sir Syed's stature on the same.

Inaugural Session was held in Kennedy Auditorium and Professor Tariq Mansoor, Vice Chancellor, A. M. U. was the chief guest, Professor Faizan Mustafa, Vice-Chancellor, Nalsar, Hyderabad was the guest of honour, he extended the inaugural address. The key-note Address was forwarded by Professor Irfan Habib, Professor Emeritus, AMU, assessing Syed Ahmad Khan as a reformer. The Presidential Address was delivered by Professor Tariq Mansoor.

Archaeological Exhibition

Following the Inaugural Session was the inauguration of the Exhibition at Department of History on 'Aligarh's Archaeological Tradition from the founder, Sir Syed Ahmad

Khan to the Present'. The exhibition displayed an impressive assortment of the archaeological findings of Sir Syed and original manuscripts of many documents of his time and earlier period, preserved by the Centre of Advanced Study.

Academic Session

Day 1

The Academic sessions of the seminar were conducted at the Faculty of Arts Lounge. The first session was chaired by Deepak Kumar (J. N. U.), Prof. Shireen Moosvi presented on the theme

'Syed Ahmad Khan and Modern Historiography' her paper gave a historical assessment of his works on Medieval Indian History and the influences that determined his works. The paper dealt in a comprehensive fashion with the many sincere works of Syed Ahmad ranging from Jam i Jam, Asar-us-Sanadeed, Silsilatul Muluk etc which was the first time an Indian took analytical history over descriptive one.

Dr. Hilal Ahmad's (C. S. D. S.) paper was themed 'Syed Ahmad Khan and the Metaphors of Post-colonial Politics' he elucidated on how Sir Syed embodied Muslim voice at his time and how they are



Fig. 14: Vice Chancellor inaugurating the exhibition



Fig. 15: The First Session of the Conference

presented in the Post-colonial arena. He deciphered the deviation between Separatism and Community Empowerment in the context of Syed Ahmad's tools of reform. Dr. Anirudha Desh Pande (DU) presented a paper themed ' Contextualising Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Reform Rationality in the 19th century' and comprehended Syed Ahmad's nature of reform to the fellow scholars and students. He aimed at Dissecting Sir Syed's idea of a 'synthesis between west and east' and also pointed to the fallacies of Nationalist interpretations of the Revolt of 1857 as a mere recent invention.

The next session was chaired by Prof. Farhat Hasan (DU). Prof. David Lelyveld (New York) joined the seminar through skype, he delivered a spectacular presentation on the theme, 'Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the reconciliation of Science', technology and religion'. He gave an insight on how path breaking was Sir Syed's trip to London in shaping his scientific temperament. He pointed to the manifestation of scientific argument in Syed's world view after 1865 and his family's fascination with Science. He also hinted at Sir Syed's scepticism of the 'asnad' or chain of narrators in history writing which was indeed a pioneering realization. He concluded his paper on the node that Syed wanted Muslims to participate in the transformation towards scientific view of reality and open service to humanity. The second paper was by Dr. Soofia Siddiqui (St. Stephens, DU) on 'Reason, 'Rebellion, Loyalty in the context of Sir Syed'. She hinted at the misconceptions regarding 'Loyalty' as a

conditional element in the political discourse of a certain period which is not as transparent as its thought to be.

Day 2

The proceedings of the Academic session was chaired by Prof. Rakesh Batabyal (JNU). The first paper was read by Prof. Mazhar Husain (JNU), themed 'Reason and Religion : Re-imagining Islamic Tradition'. The paper dealt in depth the ideological differences on issues of Science and Religion with respect to Sir Syed and his

contemporaries such as Mohsinul Mulk and Nazeer Ahmad.

The second paper was forwarded by Prof. S. Irfan Habib (Former Abul Kalam Chair, NUEPA, New Delhi) themed ' Reason and critical thinking in Islam: An overview of Syed Ahmad Khan' s Modernity', the paper emphasised on Islam being, in essence of Modernist temperament and defaced only by the orthodox sections on misinterpretations and confining the knowledge acquiring discourse to purely theological terms.

The second part of the Academic session was chaired by Prof. Rajat Dutta (JNU). The paper was presented by Prof. Iftikhar Malik (University of Bath, UK) through Skype, following his inability to join the Seminar. The paper was themed 'Sir Syed and the debate on Islam and the enlightenment', the paper deciphered the reformist notions of Europe and enlightenment as the driving forces for Syed's method of reform. Following which was the paper by



Fig. 16: David Lelyveld delivering his talk through Skype



Fig. 17: A Glimpse of Panels on the Second Day

Prof. K. L. Tuteja on 'Community, Nation and Sir Syed' in which he detailed the complexities and context of Community build up, to not necessarily invoke religious affiliations. The third paper of the session was by Mr. Qurban Ali (RSTV) on 'Syed's Quest for Scientific temperament and plural society'. The paper presented out a brief biographical account of Sir Syed's life and his method of reform towards the fast changing society.

The third session was chaired by Prof. Rizwan Qaiser (JMI, Delhi) and the paper was by Prof. Ruby Maloni (Mumbai) themed on ' Syed Ahmad Khan and Modernity : interface with western thought' which dealt with notions of Islamic Modernism inspired by English enlightenment and Benthamite Utilitarianism. The second paper was by Dr. Karam Malhotra (Patiala) on ' Syed Ahmad Khan in the Punjab' the paper dealt with the political milieu of Punjab in the colonial period and Sir Syed's involvement in the 'anjuman e Islamia' there. The last paper of the third session was by Prof. Rakesh Batabyal (JNU) on 'Sir Syed and the tradition of rhetoric in India' which gave an insight in the different kinds of political speeches and Sir Syed's firm grip upon rhetorical speech and persuasion. The academic sessions inspired lively discussions on the part of teachers, scholars and students of the department. Following which the play on Sir Syed was staged by the University Drama Club, CEC, AMU in the Kennedy Auditorium.

Day 3

The first session was chaired by Prof. Shafey Kidwai (AMU). The paper was presented by Dr. Alassan Kutty P. (Kerala) on ' Reason and tradition in the speeches and writings of Sir Syed : A historical Analysis'. The paper gave an objective analysis on Sir Syed's rationalist bent sans a compromise with the teachings of Quran. It also highlighted the historical malady of Sir Syed's age which was the constant tussle between Scientific temper and age old traditions and Sir Syed's effective balance of both.

Following which was a presentation by Ast. Prof. Gulfisha Khan (AMU) on 'Sir Syed and New Astronomy', the presentation touched upon an entirely new discourse on Sir Syed's scientific temperament in dealing with concepts of Indo-Islamic traditions of Astronomy, his study of the architecture of the Jantarmantra in the momentous work 'Zij - i-Muhammed Shahi'. The presentation emphasised on the need to further the studies on such works and translate and edit them for general masses.

The second paper was by Prof. S. M. Azizuddin Husain (J. M. I, New Delhi) on 'Ziauddin Barani's Tarikh i Firuzshahi' s Text prepared by Sir Syed : An examination'. The paper critically analysed Sir Syed's sincere and honest attempts on both understanding and translating the medieval India Source.

The final session was chaired by Dr. Rana Safvi (Delhi) and the paper was read by Dr. Parvez Nazir (AMU) on the theme ' Sir Syed's vision in



Fig. 18: S. Irfan Habib, Prof. Rakesh Batabyal and Prof. Ishrat Alam during one of the tea breaks

Empowering Indians'. It gave an overview of Sir Syed's model of upgradation of Syllabi and curriculum in the teaching system and his firm stand on freedom of press and cultural empowerment during the Colonial Rule.

The last paper of the session was by Dr. Richa Raj(DU) on 'The Star and the Lion : Contextualising Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Lala Lajpat Rai in the 19th C India'. The paper dealt with the ideological relationship both the reformers shared and Lala Lajpat's fond admiration of Sir Syed as 'the Patriarch of the Indian family'.

The thought providing papers established a healthy academic dialogue from teachers and students alike. The Vote of thanks was delivered by S. Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Chairman and coordinator, Centre of advanced study, Department of History. Summing up the personage of Sir Syed as 'evolutionary' and uncompromising when it came to ideas and actions.

News from the Department

Survey Trip of M.A. Students

The Qutb Complex, Mehrauli Archeological Park and Tughluqabad Fort



Fig. 19: Group of MA Final year students with the delegation from Delhi University at the Qutb Complex

The Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University in the month of March organized two Academic Trips of M.A. Final Year students. The trip was specially organized for the students who had pursued Medieval Archeology but the whole of the batch voluntarily went to these trips, which the testimony of the enthusiasm and interest of students in learning about the material culture of the past through the remains of the monuments which they visited.

In the trip we were accompanied by our Chairman, Prof Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Prof Jabir Raza, Prof M. K. Pundhir, Dr. Shadab Bano, Dr. Fazila Shah, Dr. Enayatullah. And we were also accompanied by few members from Archeology Section which included Mr. Vinod Kumar Singh, Mr. Zameer Ahmad. The official photographer Mr. Shoaib also accompanied us to document both the trips. Members of Office Staff, Mr. Muzamill and Mr. Saghir also accompanied us. Some of the Research Scholars also went along with us on these trips.

On 4th March 2018, the first trip was organized for Delhi in which the students and staff visited the Qutb Complex, Mehrauli Archeological Park and

Tughluqabad Fort. At Qutb Complex we were joined by Dr. Amita Paliwal and three of her students. Dr. Paliwal teaches History at Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi. Within the Qutb Complex we saw Qutb Minar, Qubbat-ul Islam Mosque, Iron Pillar (which is kept in the mosque courtyard), Tomb of Iltutmish, and Alai Minar. The area was previously known as Lal Kot, which translated as Red Fort but when it came under the Turks, the Turkish sources mention it as Qila-i-Rai Pithura. The mosque which was built, utilized the materials from twenty-seven Hindu and Jaina temples. The presence of twenty-seven temples in an area suggest to the fact that how vibrant the city was even before the arrival of the Turks. On the pillars which have been used in the mosque to raise the ceiling had human faces in it and today we can see that hasty attempt was made by the masons to deface them, as in Islam human figures are not used for decorative purpose, however at some pillars we find gargoyles which according to Dr Paliwal were made by masons in order to ward off the evil spirit and this shows that the even Turkish rulers were ready to share the belief of the indigenous people! In the middle of the courtyard, stands the Iron Pillar which is the earliest existing monument in the area,



Fig. 20: Survey of the Tughlaqabad Fort

, its original place of erection is controversial, it is believed that a King named Chandra from some minor dynasty is said to have built the pillar. The arched screen or maqsura in the western side was constructed in 1199 A.D. which was to give the mosque an Islamic look. This being a huge wall of masonry which was constructed using indigenous techniques as the arches were made by corbelling method. Initially, there were five arches, central arch being the highest, flanked by two lower arches. During the time of Sultan Iltutmish in 1230 A.D. when the expansion of the mosque was carried out three more arches were added on both the sides (one big arch flanked by two smaller arches) thereby making total eleven arches. The maqsura was beautifully carved which had arabesque design and Arabic calligraphy mostly in form of Quranic verses. The tomb of Iltutmish located outside the northwest angle of the mosque, from outside the square tomb chamber is plain, however, the interior walls of the chamber are intricately decorated, the cenotaph is made up of white marble. The Alai Darwaza was erected by Alauddin Khalji to serve as one of the four entrances to the mosque complex, located on the southern side of the mosque complex was in fact, the landmark in the history of medieval architecture as here for the first time we find a building which is totally arcuate in style i.e. having true arch and true dome. This monument has heavily drawn inspiration from Seljuqid architecture. The last monument which stands tall in the whole complex is the Qutb Minar, which was constructed as a victory tower by

Qutbuddin Aibek who ordered its construction in last decade of the twelfth century. It is approximately 239 feet tall tapering tower comprising five storeys. In plan the tower is circular, and each storey has a different style of flutings. The Minar is entered by a gateway which is provided on the northern side.

After visiting all sites in the Qutb Complex, we headed towards the Mehrauli Archeological Park which is adjacent to the Qutb Complex. Here we visited Jamali-Kamali Mosque and Tomb. It was constructed in 1528-29, the Tomb complex which lies next to the Mosque was however closed. The mosque is made up of red sandstone and is claimed to be the forerunner of the Mughal mosque architecture. The name of the mosque and tomb complex is derived from the name of the two persons buried there viz., Jamali and Kamali. "Jamali" was the alias given to Shaikh Fazlu'llah, also known as Shaikh Jamali Kamboh or Jalal Khan, a renowned Sufi saint who lived during the pre-Mughal dynasty rule of the Lodi's, a period from the rule of Sikander Lodi to the Mughal Dynasty rule of Babur and Humayun. Jamali was greatly regarded. Kamali was an unknown person but associated with Jamali and his antecedents have not been established.

The last site which we visited in this area was the tomb of Ghiyasuddin Balban, built in c. 1287 CE is made of rubble masonry, this tomb is of great importance as here the true arch and true dome first made its appearance, however, now the tomb stands



Fig. 21: Students of MA Final Year with teachers at the Tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq

in ruins and no longer survives thereby making Alai Darwaza the first extant monument having true arch and true dome. It is said that Balban, after becoming Sultan strictly maintained his distance from people of low birth, maintained the same distance when he died. Not only the tomb structure is hidden from the view but also the cenotaph which marks the grave is lying outside the complex. The condition of the tomb complex is extremely poor, it is pertinent that Archaeological Survey of India carries out major restoration works and preserve whatever remains of the monument as it is.

plaster was used to cover the surface. In Tughluqabad, since rubble stone was used we see that surface decoration of the previous centuries vanished and stucco and painted surface became common. At Ghiyasuddin's tomb we see tapering walls like the one found in the entire town, this was perhaps a defensive feature. Much attention was paid to the defense as during this period the Mongol threat was very much at its height. The visit to this site marked the end of our first academic trip in which we learned about the architectural features of the Sultanate period.

After having lunch, which was provided by CAS, Department of History, we went to visit the third and the last site of the day, the fourteenth century town of Tughluqabad, which was built by the founder of Tughluq Dynasty, Ghiyasuddin Tughluq between 1320-1325. The beauty of this town remains in the fact that it gives us an opportunity to study an early 14th century town without any later changes or alterations as this town was built and abandoned within a generation. The town now stands in ruins due to pilfering of the later periods and due to half-hearted attempts of ASI at its preservation. The only building that still survives is the tomb of Ghiyasuddin himself which located on the southern part of the town, constructed within a small fortified castle, it is connected to the fort by a causeway which is about 300-meter long. The town employs the use of new material of construction the stone rubble bonded with lime mortar and thick layer of lime

News from the Department

Survey Trip of M.A. Students Fatehpur Sikri



Fig. 22: Prof. Rezavi explaining the details of the excavations of Nobles Houses at Fatehpur Sikri

On 18 March, 2018, the Department of History, Centre of Advanced Study, AMU took a survey trip to the Mughal Township of Fatehpur Sikri near Agra. The trip was organised for students who offered Medieval Archaeology in MA final year. A host of teachers accompanied the trip.

Fatehpur Sikri is one distinctive establishment to display how a typical Mughal Capital looked like. The Royal orders for the construction of this capital were dispatched in 1571 and by 1578 it was completed. But, just like the Tughlaqabad capital, Delhi of Sultanate period, Fatehpur Sikri was also abandoned within few years, however it flourished as a center of commercial activity of Indigo Plantation and carpet weaving up to the reign of Shahjahan, after which it declined sharply.

To a student of Medieval Archaeology, Fatehpur Sikri remains primal as it helps in unravelling the technicalities of how a Mughal Township was established and the structures it contained.

The trip, under the guidance of Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, (Chairman and coordinator of Department of

History) allowed the students to comprehend the importance of this neglected expertise in reconstructing Mughal History.

The town as was fortified on 3 sides with 8 gates Agra and Ajmeri Gate being chief and the lake on 3 sides (now dry) on the east. The Mughal building enterprise set foot here with the constitution of Bagh e- Fath after Babur's victory at Battle of Kanua. Akbar's interest in the town started from 1571, the Palace of Birbal is said to be the first structure constructed. Geometrical precision and symmetry seem to be the hallmark of Fatehpur's architecture.

The Town

As we reached the Township, we were we discerned the 10 Quarter division of the town ranging from habitation of imperial bureaucracy, houses of Nobility on top Ridge, commercial centers and markets, Palatial Complex and civic population below. The habitation of merchants displayed the close relationship between Political authority and Commercial class. Pleasure Pavilions, open fields, gardens and baolis or water tanks were established at



Fig. 23: The group of MA Final Year students and teachers at Fathpur Sikri

the periphery. The survey by historians from Aligarh discovered a number of structures meant for Nobility near the north ridge of the the Vindhyas. The images of artisanal activity and iron smiths is well preserved by the shopping complexes that are extant. Towards the Southern-ridge a residential structure, a hammam and a square tank is also found.

The Palatial Complex

We entered the Royal complex through the Diwan-e-Aam, a large complex with galleries on four sides enclosed by cloisters meant for Emperor Akbar's public engagements. The north-gateway leads to the Haus-e-Shirin or water tank for Kitchen adjacent to the Hathi Pol (the Elephant Gate) or the Ceremonial entrance to the imperial complex, where now a courtyard is constructed for the visitors. The Hiran Minar is a tower embedded with elephant tusks stands between the Hathi pol and the dried lake. Prof. Rezavi opines that its utility was that of an Akakhdiya (a light house) to guide the night travellers. Then on, we entered the Diwan khana-i-khas, which is a two-roomed structure near the Emperor's Khwabgah or resting chamber, the Diwan-i-khas has a richly carved pillar with 4 bridges emanating at its pinnacle where Akbar is said to have seated, emulating the unifying force of all faiths but less is believed of it. Next to Diwan-i-khas is the Chamber of Ankh Micholi, which is said to have been used as a store house for treasury, these structures have paintings on their walls which have weared due to time, next to it we entered another

chamber the Khalwat kada-i-Khas or the room for important guests of the Emperor, the Chamber has a heavily plastered window which seems like the Jharokha. The first floor of the Diwan-i-khas is connected to Panchmahal and Mariam Makhani's house which is a columnar structure with domed kiosks at angles, with paintings of Elephants, Bazar scenes, court scenes and murals of Hindu dieties which established the perfect fusion of Indian architecture in Mughal structures, Prof. Rezavi asserts is actually a Royal dinning hall observing the proximity of the kitchen chamber to the structure. The Hujra-i-Anuptalao is a carved pavilion with brackets and pilasters, next to it we entered a building with red sandstone columns and delicate carvings running on 3 sides to form a portico, we're informed is Akbar's Daftarkhana (declared so, by Archaeological Survey of India) but based on study of contemporary sources, Prof. Rezavi establishes it to be the Ibadatkhana or the Prayer chamber where Akbar's famous inter-religious discussions were held. Anuptalao is connected to the Abdarkhana or the storage for fruits and beverages by a passage for unhindered supply directly to the Emperor. Near it is the Haram sarai or Royal female chamber with exquisite carvings and blue glazed tiles from Multan. The structure next to it, Birbal's house is still debatable because of its proximity to private female chambers of the Royal house.

The survey trip gave an entirely different horizon to the students for looking at Medieval archaeology



Fig. 24: The Hathi Pol at Fatehpur Sikri

And its scope. The existence of paintings of Secular and civic nature on the walls of Imperial complex established the strong connection that the Royalty had with the realm. Along with murals, the presence of animal figurines essentially suggestive of deity worship of Hindus on the Palatial buildings establish the close amalgamation of Indian techniques with Central - Asian architecture at Fatehpur Sikri and their ready absorption and tolerance by the Mughal sovereigns.

News from the Department

Function of Sultania Historical Society 3rd June, 2018



Fig. 25: Annual Function of Sultania Historical Society

The annual function of the Sultania Historical Society was held on Sunday, 3rd June 2018. In this function the outgoing batch of M.A. is given a farewell party followed by a dinner. For years this tradition has been followed however, this year the Sultania Historical Society which had been defunct for many years and was invoked only for the annual function was revived through the efforts of the Chairman & Coordinator of the Centre of Advanced Studies, Prof Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi,. In the function this year an annual report of the Society was given by its Secretary Miss Asra Alavi, student of M. A. final year, who informed the gathered audience about the various activities conducted by the Society. The Society conducted regular Seminars on Saturdays which were followed by discussions, in these seminars not only M. A. students, research Scholars and faculty members of the department of History presented their papers but throughout the session the Society was a host to many eminent historians like Prof Mridula Mukherjee, Prof. Aditya Mukherjee, Prof. Yasmin Saikia and Dr. Anirudh Despande.

Apart from holding seminars, the Sultania Historical Society through the Bulletin of Sultania Historical Society(BOSHS), a quarterly journal, documented the various papers read in these Saturday Seminars by the students, research scholars and teachers. Apart from this in the journal many articles were also reproduced. Till date, the Secretary informed, an entire volume containing 4 issues has been out.

The Annual Function started with an introduction of Sultania historical society by the Chairman and how this society has been functioning as a part of the department since the very beginning. It was originally named as the Historical Society, it was renamed after Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum following MAO College's upgradation to University in 1920. The Chairman also informed the audience that each year the Society gives away two prizes, Razmi Rizwan Memorial Award, given to a student securing highest marks in the first year with medieval India and Sohail Ahmad Award given to the student scoring highest marks in first year in ancient India.



Fig. 26: Asra Alavi receiving award for scoring highest marks in MA First year

These awards are given in the memory of two brilliant students of the Department of History. This year the Razmi Memorial Award was given to Miss Asra Alavi, who secured highest marks in medieval India in the first year, she was also facilitated for securing highest overall score in the first year. Unfortunately, this year the Sohail Memorial Award was not awarded because no student from M.A. batch 2016-18 opted for ancient India. Mr. Sajad Hassan Khan was given the prize for scoring the highest marks in Modern India. This year another award was given to the student who secured second position with difference of just a single mark and this prize was given to Miss Suraksha Singh who has medieval India as her specialization.

After the awards ceremony all the faculty members, students and staff joined the dinner party which was followed by long interactions of students and a photography session.

Reproduced below is the speech delivered by the Secretary of the Sultania Historical Society on behalf of the outgoing batch of students:

“Good evening and Welcome everyone to the Annual Function of Sultania Historical Society (SHS). First of all, I would like to thank all the teachers, research scholar (s), non teaching staff, and my friends for joining us all here. I presume it would be totally unnecessary on my part to introduce the SHS once again, since the society this year has been

active throughout the session, this is something which is different from all the previous years. And for this we have Prof Nadeem Rezavi to thank, it is by his undaunted efforts that this society saw light of the day after many years. Thank you Sir for providing us all the students and research scholar a platform through which we can improve upon our skill and learn what the academic world has to offer us.

In the second half of the previous session we came up with the idea of having regular Saturday Seminars and this session these seminars were organised by the SHS, in which not only MA students, research scholars, faculty members of our department as well as that of other departments but many stalwart Historians from other academic institutions read their respective papers and interacted with students in Q&A session. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Dr Anirudh Despande, who teaches at Delhi University, his lectures left us all in great awe and we are thankful to him for sharing his thoughts with. After that the two stalwart Historians duo of Modern India, Prof Aditya and Prof Mridula Mukherjee graced us with their kind words and hearing them has been something which I wanted since my graduation days and I personally was very overwhelmed by what Prof Aditya Mukherjee said in his presentation. Then we had Prof Yasmin Saikia from Arizona state university who also happens to be alumna of this department, she talked to us on research prospects in the foreign countries, seeing

certainly inspirational for us.

Around the time of Sir Syed Bicentennial birth Anniversary the department of History organise a national seminar in collaboration with Sir Syed Academy in which we once again had an encounter with many stalwart Historians of their respective fields. During this time the SHS had organised two seminars which were on Sir Syed, the first lecture was delivered by Prof Mohammad Sajjad on Communalism and Sir Syed, while Ms Lubna Irfan spoke on Sir Syed as Historian.

[The seminars were held on a regular basis but these seminars were never in the way of our studies and wherever we had any exam or sessional tests which by the way were many, these seminars were postponed to some other day, so while the were preparing all of us especially the MA students for future, these seminars had an element flexibility in them we never felt burdened with it as at the end of the day they were being conducted for our benefit only and were preparing us better all for the challenges academic world has to offer. I would like to thank all the teachers who sat and chaired these seminars hearing our presentation and giving back the positive criticism and feedback and every Saturday even though I sat in the audience I learned something new about the field of research. So I would like to specially thanks Prof Nadeem, Prof Jabir Raza, Prof Mohd Sajjad, Dr Shabad Bano, Dr Syed Ali Kazim, who chaired various seminars in this session and through their inputs added to our knowledge.

[The next undertaking of the SHS was documenting all the presentations and seminars and this was achieved through the medium of Bulletin of Sultania Historical Society (BOSHS), a quarterly journal in which contribution were made by all those who presented their papers in the Saturday Seminars as well as by others in form of book reviews and we also through the medium of this journal reproduced many old article which are not easily available, but are extremely important for a student of history to read. In fact, an entire issue was dedicated to this work. Till date an entire volume containing 4 issues has been out and the second volume's first issue will be out shortly.

| I being the Secretary of the Sultania Historical society also had the virtue of being the joint editor of this journal but if I speak honestly then this whole work of journal was and is done alone by Ms Lubna Irfan who is a research scholar in this very department and also the editor of the journal and it was through her efforts that this journal could be

materialised and not only that she also rendered me her help in organising these seminars and was always steadfast in helping me and many other classmates of mine with whatever guidance needed. . Thank you Lubna Appi for all your assistance and I am glad that you are here today otherwise all of what I just said would have simply seemed way too weird. Among the juniors it was Zainab Naqvi who always coordinated and helped me out and I could always rely on her, so I would also like to express my gratitude towards her and wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

[Being the secretary was not always fun and many times I was at lost and especially when I was asked to sit alongside the guests and introduce them to the audience and I was not always very effective in doing that small job, because half of the time I was in awe of the visiting fellows and always questioned myself If I was fit for introducing them?

[I personally thank Nadeem Sir for giving me and all of us this opportunity through your endeavours and I hope that this society continue to progress like anything and it once again sees it's golden days and in fact tops them up with new contribution.

[If I may be allowed to continue, I would briefly like to thank all the remarkable teachers who in the course of two years through their efforts added not just to our overall knowledge, but also moulded us into the best version of ourselves. I would like to thank all the faculty members of the this department, who acted as our guides. Special thanks is due to Prof Irfan Habib and Prof. Shireen Moosvi whose doors were always open for our queries and in fact they welcomed our questions with great joy.

Furthermore I would like to thank the two teachers who have taught most of us throughout the two years of MA , Prof Ishrat Alam and Prof Nadeem Rezavi , both of these scholars had a distinct style of teaching but one thing which is common in both of them is their dedication towards their students and the fact they always had time for all of always despite the fact that they have extremely busy schedule. The two of you not only taught us well in academics but also in the life. We really enjoyed the anecdotes and stories that shared you. Thank you, Ishrat Sir and Nadeem Sir for being so kind and welcoming.

[Although, Prof Sajjad never taught me but after every seminar he would like to talk to us and clear out our questions and queries, even if it took hours, thank you sir for your kind gesture.

[Dr Shadab Bano and the students who pursued

gender relations including me in this year shared a very interesting relation, where she not only taught us about the course which at times led to long discussions and debates but also she provided us with her guidance and help with whatever we needed. The sea of knowledge which Dr Syed Ali Kazim has shared with us, astounded all of us greatly. You were extremely lenient as a teacher and many time we have taken undue advantage of your leniency and I on behalf of my classmates apologize. I would also like Prof Mohd Parvez who hasn't taught me but I've always heard words of praise for him from my classmates.

If I go on with personally thanking each and everyone of the teacher then I don't think anyone else would be getting the opportunity to speak today as each and every faculty member of this department had somehow or the other touched our all our lives. The department being a centre of Advanced Study is extremely welcoming to all of its students and it is only because of the efforts of the remarkable teachers who actually make the department what it is. So I thank all the faculty members and apologize if we have offended anyone.

Next, I would like to thank the non-teaching staff of this department who were always kind and steadfast in helping us, especially Ajaz Bhai the jack of all trades. All of you made our journey in this department easier.

Lastly, I would like to thank the remarkable fellow classmates of mine who provided me with not only their intellectual company and also with so many laughs and memories to cherish. I could hope for the better bunch as my classmates and I am extremely thankful that I have you all as my classmates and friends and I will forever cherish the memories which we all have created together.

Thank you all for being such a nice and kind Audience.

News from the Department

Symposium

Our Heritage at Risk : The Problem of Managing our National Monuments



Fig. 27: Panel of Speakers for the Symposium

A Symposium on Our Heritage at Risk : The Problem of Managing our National Monuments was organised by the Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, AMU. The symposium was conducted to raise concern regarding the harm being done to national Heritage with increasing privatization and handing over of India's heritage to Private groups and trusts, the primary focus of the symposium was the passing of Red Fort to the Dalmia Group and the Case of handing over of Humayun's Tomb to the Agha Khan Trust. These groups in the name of restoring the structures seem to trample upon the essence of a heritage building by 'reconstructing' them.

The seminar saw some prominent names in the field of archaeology and Monumental restoration as speakers. Professor Jamal Hasan, Former Director ASI (New Delhi) and Dr. Shama Mitra Chenoy (DU) were the guest speakers.

Professor Emeritus, Irfan Habib introduced the seminar elaborating on, 'What Constitutes a Monument and their Protection' Professor Habib said the Latin word 'monumentum' means to 'remind'

and our efforts at preserving heritage must necessarily not compromise the authenticity of the Historical structures. He voiced that the injustice to the Monumental heritage is either done on

- a) Communal grounds or
- b) For Big business,

He stated that the policy of 'De- Protection' as in the case of Water works at Fatehpur Sikri or the misrepresentation of Monuments done by monopolising information / propaganda /ticketing are major challenges. He highlighted the importance of preserving the heritage but not 'renewing' it.

Professor Shireen Moosvi (AMU) dissected the effect of Private interests on Monument Management as in the case of Humayun's Tomb at the Hands of the Agha Khan Trust and its tempering with the originality of the tomb without any consultation with the Advisory Board of ASI. She insisted that preservation must not collide with the authenticity of any structure.

Professor Jamal Hasan on the question of



Fig. 28: Prof. Rezavi giving his presentation

Preservation being a Private enterprise, gave a presentation on how the repair works of Private bodies mock the essence of History and dignity for a tomb or mouseoleum, he cited a number of examples where reconstruction was guised as preservation as in the case of Hunayun's Tomb and the Sunder Nursery area. Furthermore he also urged the need for more academicians joining the ASI to better collaborate with preservation works.

Dr. Sharma Mitra gave a talk on Heritage preservation and Delhi Monuments, she pointed at the unfortunate disappearance of many important structures from Delhi, she also pointed to private ownerships of structures like the Golf Club, Lal Bungalow or Tomb of Syed Abid and the violation of the 300- meters rule with many constructional works springing up near these monuments. She insisted at the need for setting a certain standard for the Policy of Preservation and one such could be Public Partnerships, because people in themselves are central in owning the heritage of a certain place as in the Case of preservation of Shahjahanabad.

Lastly, Professor Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Chairman, Department of History (AMU) presented on The Canons of Preservation of Medieval Monuments as in the case of Fatehpur Sikri, he elaborated on the harm done to these buildings by doctoring reconstruction into them or eradicating many important historical entities such as the paintings on the walls or mason's marks in the name of preserving

a Monument.

The Symposium aimed to give a call for agitation and raising awareness for people's own Heritage and History before it is completely lost.

Recent Publications of the CAS Department of History, AMU

